

"MARK ME, SIR! MARK ME!"

THREE COLONIAL BOYS

A Story of the Times of '76.

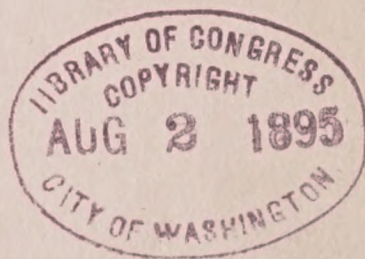
BY

✓
EVERETT T. TOMLINSON,

Author of "The Search for Andrew Field," "The Boy Soldiers of 1812," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

CHARLES COPELAND



BOSTON:

W. A. WILDE & COMPANY,

25 BROMFIELD STREET.

1895

PZ7
-T597
The

COPYRIGHT, 1895,
W. A. WILDE & COMPANY.

All rights reserved.

THREE COLONIAL BOYS

12-39425

TO MY NAMESAKE,
Eberett D. Davis,

Who first saw the light in the historic town in which many of the deeds recorded in this story were done, in the hope that its lessons of loyalty to family, friends, city, state, and nation may not be wholly lost,

This Book is affectionately dedicated

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THIS book is the first of a series and is therefore introductory. While it is my design to cover the outlines of the struggle for independence in the series, it is in the form of stories that I wish to do this, and through the stories to lead the younger readers into the history itself.

The setting of this story is in the main historically true. The feeling between the Whigs and Tories, the London Trading and Whale-boat Warfare, the characteristics of the soldiers, the sending of the powder from New Jersey to Cambridge, and the pictures of town life are all true. The life and feelings of the people who did the great deeds ought as much to be known as the deeds themselves. Indeed, this is the history of which the other is only the manifestation.

In times like the present there is special need of these lessons. To hold fast is as necessary as to prove. In the hope that some lessons of patriotism as well as an interest in the story itself may be aroused, this book is sent forth.

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. AN ANGRY MASTER	11
II. A COLONIAL SERENADE	19
III. HOW THE MASTER BECAME A PRISONER	27
IV. AN INDIGNATION MEETING	35
V. AN UNFORTUNATE STATEN ISLANDER	43
VI. AN ESCAPE IN THE FOG	50
VII. A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE	58
VIII. DRIFTING	66
IX. JOURNEYING TO NEW YORK	77
X. FOUND AND LOST	85
XI. EVART'S EXPERIENCE	93
XII. A LONG VOYAGE	103
XIII. AN ESCAPE IN THE DARKNESS	112
XIV. EXCITING REPORTS	121
XV. A NEW EXPEDITION	130
XVI. JOSEPH'S DISCOVERY	139
XVII. JOSEPH USES THE WHIP	149
XVIII. BLOCKING AN INCENDIARY	159
XIX. RIDING IN THE NIGHT	168
XX. A SAD LOSS	179
XXI. THE ACCUSERS ACCUSED	188
XXII. TOWED BY THE PETREL	198
XXIII. ETHAN'S ENEMY'S TRIUMPH	209
XXIV. STRANGE COMPANIONS	219
XXV. THE SCHOOLMASTER MYSTIFIES THE BOYS	228
XXVI. JOHN RESOLVES TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM	239
XXVII. A CLEW	248
XXVIII. THE MYSTERY DEEPENS	259

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXIX. THE PROBLEM BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT	269
XXX. A REAR GUARD	280
XXXI. AN INQUISITIVE STRANGER	291
XXXII. JOSEPH'S EMPTY ROOM	302
XXXIII. THE ENEMY BAFFLED	313
XXXIV. AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY .	324
XXXV. THE FIGHT AND FLIGHT OF THE FALCON	334
XXXVI. A LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY	343
XXXVII. ONE MYSTERY SOLVED AND ANOTHER BEGINS . . .	357
XXXVIII. CONCLUSION	365

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
"MARK ME, SIR! MARK ME!" Frontispiece	18
"SIC 'EM, TIGE! SIC 'EM!"	56
JUST AS HE TOOK THE OARS THEY HEARD A SHOT FIRED	120
"YOU CAN TELL NOW," SAID MR. TERRILL ANXIOUSLY.	167
"LOOK THERE! SEE THAT!" SAID JOSEPH	238

THREE COLONIAL BOYS.

CHAPTER I.

AN ANGRY MASTER.

MARK me, sir! Mark me!"

A silence quickly came over the school-room as the angry master spoke. It was almost the hour of closing, and some of the younger boys already had been dismissed. Those who were yet in the room looked toward the schoolmaster with a frightened face, and even the older boys on the back seats were startled and attentive. No one was studying, but the master was too angry to notice that which usually drew from him a sharp reprimand. The face of John Shotwell, to whom these words were spoken, became white and hard, and his seat-mate, Joseph Swan, looked at him in surprise.

John Shotwell was one of the oldest and strongest of the boys in Master Chase's Grammar School, in Elizabeth Town, in February, 1775. He had been the leader among his young friends, for no one could bat so far the little hard rubber ball

with which they played in those days, and for which John had his own special club, so thick through that it was known among the boys as the "pudden stick." No one could throw it so straight and swift as he, for they more frequently threw the ball to hit than to be caught, in those days.

When skating came on the bay, into which the Passaic and the Hackensack flowed, few could keep up with him; and when they trapped the rabbits that were always plentiful in winter in the woods that were near the town, John always had the best success; and in the handling of a boat few were his equals.

He had always been peaceable, never picking a quarrel, yet never running from it when once it came.

There was something about his well-knit, active, athletic figure, or else about the glance that came forth from his eyes at times, that made few care to disturb him.

Two years before this time, Schoolmaster Chase had come from England and cast in his lot with the Colonies, but his life here had never been a happy one, as few people cared to be reminded constantly of their own lacks and of the superiority of another country. During those two years he had conducted a school, and now there were between thirty and forty boys under his care, varying in ages from the little fellow just learning his letters, to the sturdy

John and Joseph, who were almost men in size and strength.

The schoolmaster had ruled by the aid of the rod and the strap. Every morning the entire school stood in a row around the schoolroom with their toes upon a certain crack, and each scholar read a verse from the Bible, "reading around" until a chapter from the Old Testament, a Psalm, and a chapter from the New Testament had been read. If any luckless youngster were unfortunate enough to lose his place, or make a mistake in the reading, he at once stepped forward with his toes upon another crack, and joined that portion of the class which steadily grew until the reading lesson was finished. All those in the rear row then went back to their seats, while the master took his ferule and inflicted a punishment upon the outstretched palms of those who were unfortunate enough to be members of the front row.

During the day the sound of the ferule and the rod were frequently heard, and the expression with which this chapter opens — "Mark me, sir! Mark me!" — was one which the master delighted to shout and which meant that some unfortunate pupil was to come to the front of the room and, placing his toes upon one crack, bend forward until his fingers touched another crack in the floor, and in this position receive the punishment which the vindictive Englishman appeared to take delight in giving.

He was thoroughly detested by all the scholars, and yet, because he could give some opportunities that were not often to be had then, he had built up quite a large school. John Shotwell had been out of school for a year or two, but had come back with the thought that possibly a little later he might go to Nassau Hall (Princeton) which he knew first had been founded at Elizabeth Town. On his next birthday he would be eighteen years old and already he felt as if he were a young man.

Schoolmaster Chase, as has been said, was an ardent friend of the mother country. He was a large, strong, quick-tempered man, whose face flushed at the slightest provocation and of whom the smaller boys stood in great fear. They doffed their hats in the most abject manner when they met him on the street, or else ran away when they saw him approaching, to avoid even a slight contact with this great man.

John had despised him as a bully and a coward at heart, and yet never before this day had he come to an open rupture. The master had somehow avoided an issue, for, perhaps, he did not care to draw out the athletic young student, who always knew his lessons and who quietly attended to his own business. There was something about the look of his eye which showed he was not afraid of him, and he was well aware of the reputation he had among the boys.

Perhaps also he felt that John had no respect for him, which, while it did not add to his own comfort, helped him to avoid a meeting.

John was as ardent in his devotion to the cause of the Colonies as the master was in belittling them and in magnifying the goodness and power of England. John came of a strong patriotic family, and he was the third generation born in America. His father had been one of the men who had helped to restore the powder which had been seized by the Tories in Stamford, Connecticut, only a few days before this time, and John had been greatly excited over the expedition.

Mr. Shotwell was also one of the "Sons of Liberty," and had been one of the number who nearly ten years before this time had built a large gallows at Elizabeth Town, and on which they had declared that the first person that ever distributed or took out a "Stamped paper," should be hanged without judge or jury.

It was true that the gallows never had been used, but it had had a wholesome effect on the people. He also had been one of those who had presented an address to Colonel Templar five years before, telling of the good qualities of the twenty-sixth regiment when they had been withdrawn from Elizabeth Town, and the hated twenty-ninth, which had been stationed at Boston at the time of the Boston Massacre, had been sent to take their place. When

they had heard of the Boston troubles, John's father had been at the meeting held at the Court House in Newark on the eleventh of June, when the paper of William Livingston calling on all the people to stand firm in their opposition to Parliament had been adopted.

Only the previous morning John had laughed heartily when his father read to him from the New York Journal the definition of a Tory which recently had been given at a dinner party in New York.

He had come to school that morning with his blood stirred, and it was strange that on that very morning Master Chase should have been specially abusive. John watched him quietly, and while his lip curled sometimes with contempt at the master's abuse of the younger boys, he had no thought of a personal collision with him himself; but John's class had taken their places on the floor, and one of the problems in arithmetic had been to compute the amount of duty which England might collect on certain articles of import into America, and this had served the irascible schoolmaster as a text. John had solved the problem and had given the answer.

"Is that the right duty?" said the teacher.

"Yes, that's the right duty," replied John, "but that duty is n't right."

The schoolroom was silent in a moment, and some of the boys looked aghast at the boldness of anyone

who would dare to speak such words, in view of the well-known sentiments of the master.

“What do you mean, sir?” thundered the master.

“My father says that almost none of our people around here ever used the stamps, and that none but Tories wanted to.”

“What did you say, Tory or traitor?”

“Either will do,” replied John quickly, “but I said Tory.”

“Tory, Tory! What is a Tory?” said the master, growing more and more angry every moment.

“I heard my father read a good definition of one out of the New York Journal yesterday morning,” said John quietly, but with a strange look in his eyes.

“Pray, sir,” said the schoolmaster sarcastically, “be good enough to give it to us. We’ll all stop and listen to it,” he added, turning to the entire school.

“There were some men dining together in New York the other day, and one of them asked the very same question that you asked just now, ‘What is a Tory?’ and since you have told me to tell you what it was, I’ll give you the answer; but it’s his, and not mine.”

The master waited a moment, and John continued: “This man said that a Tory was a thing that had its head in England, and its body in America, and whose neck ought to be stretched.”

The face of the schoolmaster became livid. He clenched his fist and grasped his heavy ferule, and in his loudest tones he shouted, "Mark me, sir! Mark me!" but John did not move. The entire school was breathless waiting for the issue.

"Stay," said the schoolmaster. "There are not enough here now, and such an open insult must be openly punished. To-morrow morning you will come prepared to toe the mark before the entire school." Then he hurriedly dismissed them all.

The smile which John had upon his face almost made the angry man start for him then and there, ferule in hand; but he restrained himself, and smiling grimly he decided to bide his time, and permitted the school to pass out of the building.

CHAPTER II.

A COLONIAL SERENADE.

JOHN SHOTWELL walked home thoughtfully. His seat-mate, Joseph Swan, started to go with him, but when John turned to him and said, "I'll see you at the singing school to-night," he knew that he wanted to be left alone.

John's heart was hot within him. He felt mortified that he, one of the oldest of the boys and the leader of them all, should have been so spoken to before the school; and yet what could he do? Should he tell his father? But his father frequently had told him that if ever he had trouble with his teachers at school he might expect to find more when he came home, and he knew that his father was one to keep his word. His only hope was in the intense patriotism of his father, and the thought that he might prove to be his friend when he knew the cause of the trouble.

John was the youngest of seven brothers, and the only one of them all at home now. Being the seventh son, he was familiarly known as "Doctor," as there was a tradition in those days that the seventh son should be called by that name. But he hesitated about telling his father, for his stern ways

and his uncompromising loyalty to the officials in school and church, made him know that he would be angry at first; but when he entered the house he found his mother there all alone, and to her he told his whole story.

She listened quietly, although John thought he detected a slight flush upon her cheeks as he recited his story, and she promised to tell his father all about it.

The boys of those days respected their fathers, but loved their mothers; and that which John did in telling his mother of his trouble, and getting the promise of her intercession, was something not unknown in other families and by other boys.

John ate his supper, and as he glanced at his father at the other end of the table he knew that his mother had not yet told him. He did his chores for the night and then started for the singing school.

He knew that many of the boys would be there, but, mortified and angered alike at his experience of the day, he did not care to see them; but if he stayed away, he was even more afraid that they would assign another cause for his absence, and so he decided to go.

For a number of evenings he had walked home after the singing school with Hannah Boudinot, the sister of Master Chase's wife. She was a demure little maiden, as gentle as Master Chase was stern. John laughed a little to himself as he walked on, as

he thought of the way in which he had first walked home with her. He was not quite sure but that he was on one side of the street and she on the other. At any rate, he was certain that not a word had been spoken by either of them before they had arrived at her home. He wondered a little as to what she would say to him now.

The singing school had opened, and they all were singing with great enthusiasm the first piece of the evening when John entered and took his seat. One of the boys whispered to him: "We're going to fix Chase. Will you go into it?" But John only shook his head by way of reply, and tried to give his attention to the work of the evening.

The singing school was over at last, and Joseph Swan, who also had come in late, John noticed with surprise was not waiting for his sister, but had sent her home with another party of young people who would of necessity go in that direction.

Just as John was trying to get up his courage, for the fear of the "Mitten" was the great fear of his life, and had stepped forward from the line of boys waiting outside in the cold, to speak to the demure little Hannah, Master Chase suddenly came up and took her home with him.

"Come on, John; I know you'll join us now," said Joseph as he grasped his friend by the arm and started off down the street with him. "We've stood the old curmudgeon just as long as we're

going to ;” and as he walked along by the side of his friend, with many a laugh he told him of the plan which had been devised, and in the execution of the first part of which he had spent the early part of the evening.

“That’s what made me late at the singing school. He is the meanest man that ever lived. The way he hammers at the Colonies, and at us if we say a word for our own homes, is more than we want, and what he said to you to-day is the worst thing yet. You are n’t going to stand it, are you, Doctor?” said Joseph.

John said nothing by way of reply, and Joseph continued his story. “We’ve been up to the schoolhouse and what do you suppose we did? We bored a hole through the bottom of the chair that old Chase sits in, and another right through the platform and the floor under it. It’s only a little hole and you could n’t see it unless you were looking for it. Then we ran a string through the holes we had bored, and along under the floor and out at the window. I don’t suppose we’ll use it outside of the window, but we just put it that way, so that when it goes off he’ll think it’s some one outside. Well, right under the chair, and in the hole, we’ve fixed a darning-needle on a spring, and we’ve connected a cord with the whole thing, and we can pull that spring back, and send that darning-needle up through that hole in the chair in a way that will

wake up the glorious old Tory. When he starts to get up to-morrow we're going to help him."

John laughed aloud. In his mind he could see the burly schoolmaster pricked with the needle, and the angry face which he would have when the trick should have been played upon him.

"Don't you want to pull that string?" said Joseph.

"No," replied John, "that is n't in my line, and he'd charge me with it, anyway."

"Well, we're going around to serenade him now; will you come?" continued Joseph. In a moment John had forgotten about Hannah, and all his troubles, and said: "Yes, I'll come around with you and join in the chorus, anyway."

The schoolmaster lived in a house that stood back from the street and in a large yard. There were many trees and bushes there, and behind these the boys were to take their places.

John was surprised when he saw nearly fifty in the company that had gathered, and watched them with interest as they sought their positions. Soon all things were ready, and Joseph struck up a song in which all joined.

The cruel lords of Britain,
Who glory in their shame,
The project they have hit on
They joyfully proclaim;

'T is what they 're striving after
Our right to take away,
And rob us of our charter
In North America.

Old Satan, the arch-traitor
Who rules the burning lake,
Where his chief navigator
Resolved a voyage to take ;
For the Britannic ocean
He launches far away,
To land he had no notion
In North America.

He takes his seat in Britain —
It was his soul's intent
Great George's throne to sit on,
And rule the Parliament.
His comrades were pursuing
A diabolic way
For to complete the ruin
Of North America.

O George ! you are distracted ;
You 'll by experience find
The laws you have enacted
Are of the blackest kind.
I 'll make a short digression,
And tell you, by the way,
We fear not your oppression
In North America.

The boys sang each stanza louder than the preceding one, but no response as yet had come from the house. Suddenly John heard some one on the steps of the piazza say : " Sic 'em, Tige ! Sic 'em,

'Tige ! " and the savage dog, which the schoolmaster kept, started toward the singers. John never knew just what happened, but the dog began to howl and returned limping to the house, and once more the boys resumed the song which had been interrupted.

Proud George, you are engaged
 All in a dirty cause,
 A cruel war have waged
 Repugnant to all laws.
 Go tell the savage nations
 You 're crueller than they,
 To fight your own relations
 In North America.

Confusion to the Tories !
 That black, infernal name,
 In which Great Britain glories,
 Forever to her shame :
 We 'll send each foul revolter
 To smutty Africa,
 Or noose him in a halter,
 In North America.

" Oh, give them something else ! " called out Joseph. " " American Taxation ' 's all right, but let 's give them now the ' Banks of the Dee ' ; " and once more they began to sing : —

'T was winter, and blue Tory noses were freezing,
 As they marched o'er the land where they ought not to be ;
 The valiants complain'd at the fifiers' curs'd wheezing, —

The song was interrupted by the sound of a gun discharged from an upper window in the house.

The company of serenaders quickly scattered, and Joseph said: " 'T was only salt, I know, but we've stirred him up enough for to-night, I guess. What are you going to do to-morrow? " said he quizzically.

" I'm not sure just yet," replied John thoughtfully as he left his companion to go to his own home; but the question was still in his mind when he found all were in bed, and he himself, wrapped in his blankets, was trying to get to sleep — " What am I going to do to-morrow? "

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE MASTER BECAME A PRISONER.

WHEN John took his place at the breakfast table the next morning, he saw by the expression on his father's face that his mother had told him all about his trouble with the schoolmaster. Little, however, was said during the meal, and it was only after the morning prayers, for which the servants and all the members of the household were assembled, that his father spoke to him.

"John, how is this that I hear you have been having trouble with the master?"

"It was n't any trouble of my seeking," said John. "I've tried to do everything he told me to; but when he abused the Colonies I could n't keep still."

"What was it you said to him?" asked his father.

"Why all I did," replied John, "was to tell him of the definition you read in the New York Journal day before yesterday morning of a Tory, and he did n't seem to like it."

His father smiled but made no reply, and John went on to tell him all the circumstances of the preceding day, even to Hannah and the singing school, and the serenade which Schoolmaster Chase had received.

"That is what I blame you most for," said his father; "you had no right at all on his grounds."

"I suppose so," said John; "but as all the boys were going I did n't like to hold back."

"That does n't make any difference," said his father decidedly. "Every man's house is his castle, and he has a perfect right to keep out all who try to enter without his consent. If it had n't been for the serenade, I hardly think I should have made you go to school to-day; but, as it is, you'll have to go and take the consequences."

"Do you think I ought to stand still and let him thrash me just for saying what I did?" John anxiously asked.

His father hesitated a moment and then said: "I sha'n't uphold you in any rebellion against your teachers. You've gotten into this trouble yourself, and you'll have to get yourself out of it; still, I don't think I should take back any of the words I used yesterday if I were in your place, if you have told me all there was of it."

John assured his father that he had told him everything, and feeling somewhat confident that he would not blame him if he did stand up a little further for his own rights, he took his books and started for the schoolhouse.

It was not quite time, when John arrived, for the boys to be summoned to the schoolroom. They all looked at him curiously when he approached, but in

reply to the questions which they put to him as to what he intended to do in the event of the master carrying out his threat of the previous day, John only shook his head and would say nothing.

The bell soon was rung, and the boys took their places at their desks. As they came trooping into the room, one of the boys started up a verse of the song they had used on the previous night : —

Old Satan, the arch-traitor
Who rules the burning lake, —

but the expression on the master's face soon stopped any inclination to sing.

While John had not told the boys what he had in mind, he nevertheless had decided upon the course of action he should pursue, and he calmly took his seat.

When the other boys took their places he felt that the schoolmaster was watching him, but he seldom glanced in his direction. At a rap of the ferule on the desk all the boys took their places on the floor, to read from the Bible after their morning custom ; but somehow the master did not notice their mistakes that morning, and no one was called upon to step forward upon the advance line, as was the usual morning practice.

This exercise had been finished, and they all once more had taken their seats, when a hush came over the room. Everyone was anxious and won-

dering what was to come next, but the brief silence was soon broken by the voice of Schoolmaster Chase. He still sat in his seat, as he always did till the boys had taken their places on the line whenever he called out "Mark me, sir! Mark me!" This morning he was unusually slow and cool in all his movements, but at last he began to speak.

"Yesterday," said he, "I was grievously insulted in this room. The position I hold and the positions you hold entitle me to your respect at all times and under all circumstances. In spite of the grave insult which I received, I still am willing to forgive it, if the one who made it will apologize as openly as he gave the insult."

His words produced a marked effect upon the scholars, and the eyes of everyone were turned toward John, who sat, undisturbed and quiet, in his seat on the back row. The suspense was broken when John arose in the midst of a stillness that was almost oppressive, and replied to the words of the teacher.

"I presume you are speaking of me, are you not?" he said.

"Yes, sir!" gruffly replied the teacher.

"I never meant to insult you," replied John. "I have always been taught by my parents and the minister to be respectful to my elders and to my betters. If I was disrespectful yesterday, I am sorry for it and willing to say so before the school."

The face of the schoolmaster was glowing. Already the victory seemed to be his, and in a confident manner he said: "That's right, that's right; we ought never to forget the duty we owe to England. She has a right to all of the Colonies and to all that the Colonies can do for her."

"That's not what I said," said John quietly. "If I was disrespectful to you, I am willing to apologize; but I am not willing to take back one word I said about the right of England to tax us."

"You said something about 'traitors,'" said the schoolmaster angrily.

"Yes," replied John; "but it was only to answer a question you asked of me. I feel more than ever that Tory and traitor are spelled in the same way."

The face of the schoolmaster flushed and a look of intense anger spread over it. "Then mark me, sir! mark me!" he shouted in a voice that could have been heard far from the schoolhouse.

John knew that the contest was coming. The suppressed excitement in the room was intense. He heard his seat-mate say in a low tone: "Now! now! Draw it hard, draw it hard!"

"Mark me! Mark me, sir!" continued the schoolmaster. "M-a-r-k me, m-a-r-k me!" he suddenly screamed, and came up over the table in front of him, something after the manner in which the boys played leapfrog.

His face had lost its look of anger in part, and an

expression of intense pain had taken its place. The little fellows on the front benches screamed, and started from their seats at this unexpected movement of the master, evidently fearful that he had started for them, ferule in hand. The older boys on the back seat, after a silence of a moment, broke into a loud laugh.

The agony expressed by the teacher's face appeared to be intense. Whoever had pulled the spring back and sent the darning-needle up through the hole in the chair, had evidently followed the advice which Joseph gave, and had pulled it "hard."

"You did that! You did that!" said the teacher with a yell as he looked at John.

"I did not," replied John. "I had nothing to do with it."

"You did it, or you know who did it," said the teacher, his face contracting again with the pain which he still suffered.

John was silent. He could not deny that he knew who had inflicted the pain upon the teacher, and yet he would not betray his friends, and was not in the least afraid for himself.

"I'll soon see who did it!" shouted the angry master; "and if you were the one, you'll remember this day till you die. If others helped you in it, they shall take their places with you on the mark and share with you in that which is to follow."

He had meanwhile been examining the chair from

which he had started so suddenly, and discovered the contrivance by means of which the boys had driven the darning-needle into his body. He saw that the string, which connected with the spring, led down through the floor to the cellar below.

"I'll be back in a moment, just as soon as I've seen where this string leads to," he said as he started for the door which led to the room under the school. He had hardly descended before there was a wild uproar in the schoolroom; the younger boys, still somewhat afraid, were made bolder by the action of the older ones.

"Let's lock him in; lock in the old Tory!" called out Joseph, and, leading the way, he with several others made a rush for the cellar door, and securely fastening it, made the Tory schoolmaster a prisoner in the cellar of his own schoolhouse. When they returned to the room, they found John coolly gathering his books together and preparing to leave the room.

"Where are you going?" said Joseph.

"I'm going home," replied John quietly, "and sha'n't come back unless my father makes me."

"Then we're all going," said Joseph quickly, and the rest of the boys, catching something of his spirit, soon gathered their possessions together and left the place.

They had little to say in reply to the questions of those whom they met upon the streets, but they

all started for home, leaving the Tory schoolmaster behind, shut in the cellar of the building in which for two years he had ruled with a power as despotic as any king ever wielded upon his throne.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INDIGNATION MEETING.

JOHN SHOTWELL went directly to his home. In spite of his quiet manner, he was greatly excited, and in his own heart the one fear uppermost was that of his meeting with his father.

He knew how stern and rigid his father was, and how mortified he would be to have his own son a disturber of the peace. As he entered the house he was surprised to find his father there and apparently waiting for him.

John entered the room quietly, and placing his books on the table, turned toward his father, and at once gave him a full account of the exciting events of the morning.

His father had listened without replying a word, until John had come to the description of the contrivance which the boys had fixed for aiding the schoolmaster to arise from his chair; and when John told of the yell which the schoolmaster gave when the darning-needle had been sent on its errand, and how he had almost leaped over the table in front of him when he felt its prick, his father threw back his head and laughed long and loud.

“Well, John,” said he at last, “I never thought I

should uphold you in any rebellion against your lawful rulers. I don't know but that's almost as bad, though, what you've been through this morning, as the treatment that old England is giving us. I'm rebelling against that, and I don't know that I can blame my son for rebelling against the same thing in the schoolroom."

John, pleased at his father's words, said: "What am I to do now? Am I to go back to the school?"

"No," replied his father; "I rather expected that you would n't stay there very long this morning, and that's why I'm home; but probably that's the end of all your plans about going to Nassau Hall. Still, I think you can be a good man even if you don't go to college; and, while it has been my ambition to send you there, I'd rather have you the patriotic son that you are, without the education, than to have you anything else, even with it. I want you, John, to stand up for your country always. These are great times in which we live, and we're making history faster now than ever it was made before in the world, and I want you to do your part."

"I will," said John with determination; "though I don't know just what to do."

"I don't mean anything special just now," said his father, "but there's going to be a meeting at the courthouse to-night, and if you want to, you can go."

John expressed his eagerness to be present, for

he knew from the way in which his father had spoken that something unusual was likely to occur. Was there ever an active boy that did not desire to be on hand when public meetings of an exciting character were to be held?

He went out from his home to seek his friend Joseph Swan, and was greatly pleased when he saw him coming up the street with another friend, Evart Van Slyke.

Evart's home was not far from New Brunswick. His father was pastor of a Dutch church there, preaching to three different congregations on Sunday. In the morning he preached in English to one, in the afternoon in Dutch to another, and in the evening in English to a third. Evart was the youngest of twelve children, and it was to relieve his mother of a part of her heavy cares that he had been spending the winter in Elizabeth Town with an aunt, and attending the school which Master Chase had been teaching. The three boys had been great friends, and now that they were together again they reviewed the exciting experiences of the day, and talked over their plans for the future.

"My father says I'm not to go back again to school," said John.

"That's just what mine said," said Joseph "He said he wouldn't have me go where I had to listen to such stuff as that old traitor was giving us."

"I don't know what I'll do," said Evart, "but I'm afraid there won't be much of any school to go to, if they all feel about it as you do."

"Well, we'll stand together anyway and see what happens. Do you suppose the master has gotten out of the cellar yet?"

"I don't know," said John with a laugh. "I'm very certain that we sha'n't help him out."

"That's what we won't!" replied Joseph. "My people came from New England, and the New Englanders don't know much about giving up."

"Well, I'm a Jerseyman," said John. "I guess my grit won't suffer; and here's Evart, he's a Dutchman."

"Well, if I am," replied Evart, "I never brag half as much as you New Englanders have done," said he to Joseph. "Where would your New York have been if it had not been for the Dutch? Did you ever hear about a Dutchman whipping a Quaker or banishing a Baptist from his colony? Seems to me I've heard some things like that from your ancestors."

"I don't know but you have," said Joseph, "and yet we won't quarrel about that now. We're going to stand together anyway; some things are going to happen here pretty soon, and we want to do what we can. What shall we call ourselves? — 'defenders of our country'?"

John laughed and said: "I guess the country

won't depend on our defence. We might call ourselves 'the continental band.'"

"If we're going into this thing together," said Evart, "I know a better name than that for us. Only yesterday I was reading about the first triumvirate at Rome. You know Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus made up that. Why don't we call ourselves a 'triumvirate'?"

"That's what we will," said John.

"Whenever any American people get together," said Joseph with a laugh, "they always elect officers about the first thing they do."

John laughed and said: "I don't think we'll do that. The members of the triumvirate are all equal, and if any one of us gets ahead, it will be because he does more than the others."

Meanwhile the boys had walked on by the school-house, and finding a window in the cellar broken, they concluded that the schoolmaster must have made his escape.

"Let's go home by his house," said Joseph. "He wouldn't dare touch us if he saw us, and we'll see how he is, maybe;" but nothing was seen of the schoolmaster or of any of the inmates of his house as the boys passed by it, and after laughing again over the expression which they had seen upon his face in the morning, and rejoicing in the fact that they would not be compelled to listen to his abuse of their country and witness his brutal treatment of

the younger boys any more, they separated, agreeing to meet that evening at the courthouse, where the large meeting was to be held.

Early that night a large crowd of men had assembled at the courthouse in response to the call which had been issued, and the three boys, who were seated together, were interested listeners to the excited speeches of their elders.

A reference was made by one speaker to the fact that the people of the town had not long before denounced Rivington's Royal Gazetteer of New York, and declared that they would not patronize it any longer because of its Tory utterances; but this evening the speeches were mainly directed against Staten Island.

Great indignation was expressed at many of the things which the Islanders were doing, and which it was understood that they proposed to do. Some of the speakers called it a "hotbed of Toryism"; others called it "a nest of snakes," "a nurse of vipers," "the home of traitors." These and many similar extravagant expressions were used by the excited speakers of the evening, and the boys soon came to feel that Staten Island must be a very bad place indeed.

The excitement of the meeting became more and more pronounced, and before the men separated, the boys were delighted that the following resolution was adopted. amid the cheers and songs and

waving of hats by the excited men who were present:—

Whereas, The inhabitants of Staten Island have manifested an unfriendly disposition towards the liberties of America, and among other things have neglected to join in the General Association proposed by the Continental Congress and entered into by most of the townships in America, and in no instance have acceded thereto, the Committee of Observation for this Town, taking the same into consideration, are of opinion that the inhabitants of their district ought, and by the aforesaid Association are bound, to break off all trade, commerce, dealings, and intercourse whatsoever with the inhabitants of said Island until they shall join in the General Association aforesaid; and do

Resolve, That all trade, commerce, dealings, and intercourse whatsoever be suspended accordingly, which suspension is hereby notified and recommended to the inhabitants of this District to be by them universally observed and adopted.

GEORGE ROSS, *Clerk*.

The meeting broke up with cheers and songs and great excitement on the part of every one that had been present. The boys had much to say about their neighbors who lived across the Bay, and of the probable consequences of the action which the people had taken that night.

As they were walking together up the street they met one of their friends who had had his seat in the same row with them, in the school, and who called out to them and asked them to stop a moment and listen to him.

“I’ve got some great news for you! Oh, it’s

good! I've not heard anything like it in a long time!"

The boys stopped and listened to their excited friend, and soon were as enthusiastic as he over the news he had received.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNFORTUNATE STATEN ISLANDER.

CHASE has cleared out, boys. No more school! I've just heard that he's just gone over to Staten Island to-day," said the friend whom the boys met on the street.

"How do you know it? Where did you hear it?" asked John.

"A man has just been at our house," he replied, "who has just come from Staten Island. He says the schoolmaster has gone over there and that he's going to stay. He says he's in a great rage at America in general, and Elizabeth Town in particular. It seems he has some remarks to make about you too, John."

John laughed, and their companion continued: "He says the schoolmaster told him that he'd taken a house right down near the shore, facing this way. I don't suppose he wants to lose sight of Jersey entirely, as he's got something to remember it by. I wonder if he took that darning-needle with him when he went?" and all the boys laughed loud and long.

"I say, boys," said Joseph, "let's go over there and pay him a visit. I don't believe there's any one

in the world he'd like to see as he would John Shotwell;" and he slapped his friend upon the back, and once more the boys laughed heartily.

"We shall hear from him again," said John, "before many days, and I don't believe it'll be in a pleasant way either. The schoolmaster is n't one to give up a grudge very easily. He thinks King George and his throne depend upon him for their support; but we'll wait and see what comes to pass," he added as he bade the boys good-night and entered his own home.

The report which had come of the disappearance of the schoolmaster proved to be correct. The school was broken up, and the boys were free to join in the excitement of the times, which every day became stronger and stronger.

Two days after the meeting at the courthouse, of which we told in the last chapter, as John was walking down the street, he saw the other two members of the triumvirate running toward him at the top of their speed. As soon as they saw who it was, they stopped, and Joseph called out as best he could in his attempts to regain his breath: "Come on, John, come on! you're the very one we've been looking for."

"Come on where?" said John.

"Oh! down to the Stone Bridge," replied Joseph. "Jim Johnson has just come from Staten Island, and he's got an oyster boat and a good big load aboard.

He's come right up the creek to the bridge, and says he's going to sell the oysters."

"Does n't he know anything about the meeting over here the other night?" said John.

"I don't know whether he does n't know, or does n't care; and at any rate he's come right up the creek, and that, too, in the eyes of all the people. But come on and hurry up. There's a big crowd down there, and something's going to happen."

The boys started on a run and soon were in the midst of the crowd, which was evidently angry, and shouting all sorts of threats at the Staten Islander. The poor frightened man evidently did not know the cause of the trouble, and had no thought that he was violating any law of the town.

Suddenly in the midst of the excitement the boys heard some of the men begin to shout: "Out of the way! Give place! Step aside! Make room!" and they soon saw a man drive up to the bridge with two horses.

They never could tell how it was done, but soon they saw these horses hitched to the little boat and it was hauled up the street.

"To the courthouse! To the courthouse!" shouted the crowd, and to the courthouse the horses soon drew the boat and its load.

John, who had been left behind with Evart, by Joseph, who had been among the first and the most eager of the crowd to drag the oyster boat out of

the creek and up the street, turned to his companion and said: "I don't believe in this; I don't believe in it at all. It's all well enough not to have any deals with the Staten Island people, but this poor fellow doesn't know anything about it. They could turn him back, and send him home without making all this trouble for him. I'm going to tell him what he should do;" and he turned to the unfortunate Johnson who had remained behind, bewildered at the course of events, and more than half-afraid that he might be called upon by the crowd to follow his boat.

"Why don't you go up and see Squire Jonathan Hampton? He's the one for you to see, and I don't believe he'll put up with this business either," said John to the troubled man.

"Where is he? Where'll I find him?" said Johnson, too dazed to follow clearly the words which John was saying.

"I saw him in Smith's tavern, right near the courthouse when we came by," he replied; and, leading the way, Johnson followed him and found the man whom they were seeking.

He was as indignant as John at the report which was brought him, and at once promised the trembling oysterman his protection. He permitted him to sell his oysters, which two or three of the Tories purchased; and, getting his boat for him from the angry crowd, John started him off for home with the

advice that he should not come to Elizabeth Town again with any of his wares, for the protection which had been given him this time he would not again receive.

But the crowd which had gathered was not easily dispersed. It was not ill-natured, but still was determined to find some vent for its feelings. The men finally erected a gallows and proceeded to abuse the Tories and all who were friends of them.

When the gallows had been finished and many a threat had been made that the first Staten Islander to bring oysters or anything else into the town would be hanged upon it, they seemed to find their feelings relieved, and the crowd began to sing : —

Come, join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call ;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor America's name.

In freedom we 're born, and in freedom we live ;

Our purses are ready ;

Steady, friends, steady !

Not as *slaves* but as *freemen* our money we 'll give.

Our worthy forefathers — let 's give them a cheer —

To climates unknown did courageously steer ;

Thro' oceans to deserts for freedom they came,

And, dying, bequeathed us their freedom and fame.

The tree their own hands had to Liberty rear'd

They lived to behold growing strong and rever'd ;

With transport they cried : " Now our wishes we gain,

For our children shall gather the fruit of our pain."

All ages shall speak with amaze and applause
Of the courage we 'll show in support of our laws ;
To die we can bear, but to serve we disdain,
For shame is to freemen more dreadful than pain.

The crowd was still singing as the boys walked on together toward their homes.

"I think things must be pretty crooked over there on the Island," said John.

"Yes; I hear," said Joseph, "that lots of the Tories are leaving their homes all around here, and going there to stay."

"If we could just sink the Island," said Evart, "when all the Tories get on it, we could get rid of them as easily as when we drown a rat that's been caught in a steel trap. I'm for going over there some day and seeing for myself what's going on."

"We'll all go over some time," said John. "I wonder if anybody has heard anything more from the schoolmaster."

"Not very much," replied Joseph, "except that he's there yet. Oh, I did hear some one say that he said you were the cause of all his troubles, and that if it had n't been for you, he'd have been in Elizabeth Town still."

John laughed and said: "I am sorry he thinks I made him so much trouble. It does n't seem to me that I made it at all. Such a red-hot Tory as he is, is bound to have trouble anywhere in this country; still, I'm rather sorry he's gone. It's changed all

my plans, but I sha'n't grieve over that," he added as he left his companions and entered his home.

A few days after the experience with Johnson and his oyster boat, John, as he was going out from his gate, met Squire Jonathan Hampton. He thought he appeared somewhat excited, but he gave no heed to him, till two or three hours later when he returned he found him still on the piazza, talking excitedly with his father, and both men seemed to be very earnest in their conversation.

John could not hear their words, but when the squire came down the walk and passed him, John found his curiosity roused at his flushed face, and he knew that something unusual had happened, and when his father summoned him to come into his room, he knew that he was on the eve of hearing something that would interest him.

"Just see, John," said his father, "that there is n't any one in the hall before you come in, and be sure and shut the door behind you."

John, puzzled somewhat at his father's unusual manner, carefully followed his directions, and entering the room, stood in his presence and waited for him to begin.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ESCAPE IN THE FOG.

THE young man was touched at receiving his father's confidence, and also at the suppressed excitement under which he saw he was laboring. It was not often then that a father treated a son of John's age with deference. The boys at that time were in sharp subjection to their fathers, and when they had arrived at the age to which John had attained, if they wished to begin life for themselves, they frequently had to "buy out their time." It was considered only just, that when the father had cared for the boy in his early years, that when he had become old enough to be of real assistance to his father, he should give his time to him until he was twenty-one, or else, if he wished it for himself, to pay his father for the probable loss of his services.

Accordingly John was the more surprised to find his father treating him in such a confidential way, as though he were his equal. He had had a deep respect for him, but anything like tenderness or affection was something which he never had expected to receive at his hands.

"Squire Hampton has been giving me a great piece of news, John, and it may be that I shall have

to call upon you for help before his plan is carried out," said Mr. Shotwell.

John waited in silence for his father to continue, as he knew he would not be expected to ask many questions.

"The ship *Beulah* has arrived at Sandy Hook from London, with an assorted cargo consigned to Robert and John Murray. They are old Quaker merchants in New York and are supposed to be very wealthy. The New York Committee of Correspondence has ordered the Murrays to send the vessel back without breaking the bulk, and they have pretended to be willing to do this; and yet Squire Hampton thinks they're not going to do it at all. He has a suspicion that John Murray has been over here, and been trying to make an arrangement with some of the Tories here to land a part of his cargo on the sly, and he is also very suspicious that some of the people on Staten Island are mixed up in the affair, and that either some things are going to be landed there, or else that they are going to help bring some of the cargo over here. He's very desirous of finding out how these things are on Staten Island, and I've told him that I thought you and those two young friends of yours, who are with you so much, could help do this."

He waited a moment, and as John knew that he evidently expected some kind of a reply, he said: "I think we can find out what you want. At least,

we will do just what you tell us to, to the best of our ability."

"Well, what we want you to do," said his father, "is to go over there and in a quiet way find out, if you can, whether there is any likelihood of any of them having been mixed up in this affair."

"Do you want all three of us to go?" said John.

"Yes; I think that'll be best, although the squire thought you had better go alone. He said that 'one boy was a boy, two boys were only half a boy, and he did n't know just how much three boys would amount to.'"

John laughed and said: "I think the squire will find out that we boys can help one another, and will multiply and not divide the chances of finding out what he wants to know."

It was in accordance with this suggestion of Mr. Shotwell's that John sought out his companions and told them of the proposed plan. They gained their parents' consent to their joining the proposed expedition and made preparations to go the next morning.

Early on the following morning the boys met, as had been agreed, at the creek, where each of them had a little skiff. Each possessor was specially proud of his own boat, and many a race had been had to test the superiority of the skiffs. The palm had not yet been awarded to any one, and the relative merits of the boats were still a matter of dispute.

“ Shall we each one go over in his own skiff?” said Joseph.

“ I don’t think we’d better go that way,” replied John; “ do you, Evert?”

“ No!” replied Evert; “ but we’ll have to use more than one, for three of us can’t be carried over very well in any one of these skiffs; they are all too light.”

It was finally decided that John and Joseph should go in John’s boat and that Evert should use his own. They were not afraid to go openly to the island, and yet it was thought wiser for them to go around to the other side and land there, and thus avoid any possible arousing of suspicions.

The morning was somewhat foggy and the boys were compelled to keep close together; but they landed safely, however, and loitering around the dock endeavored to learn, by listening to the conversation of the men, what had been happening of late on the island.

They were fortunate above their hopes, and found it a topic of open conversation that John Murray had been over to Elizabeth Town and had arranged for a sloop belonging to Isaac Woodruff to be taken by Captain Samuel Lee to New York with a cargo, and that then he was to go down to Sandy Hook and come alongside the Beulah, and be loaded up from her cargo.

The Staten Islanders were to have a part in the

enterprise, and the sloop was to land there on her way back to Elizabeth Town from Sandy Hook, and either leave some of her cargo, or find out what was best to be done.

The conversation of the men was filled with expressions that were bitter against the Whigs and all their doings. John several times had to restrain Joseph from replying hotly to some of the rabid expressions which they heard.

"Come on, now," said he at last quietly to his companions, "we'll go back; we've found out what we want, and the squire and father will be waiting for us."

"Let's go round by the way where Chase lives," said Evart. "I'd like to see the old Tory. I wonder if he carries a cushion around with him yet;" and he laughed heartily as he recalled the last time they had seen the schoolmaster and his frantic efforts to get away from the darning-needle.

"Those little fellows on the front row thought the master was going to jump for them, I guess," said Joseph, "when they saw him coming over the table."

"He was a pretty good hand at leapfrog," said Evart. "I wonder if a darning-needle would n't help us all to jump a little higher?"

In this way, talking as they went, they soon arrived at the place where they had heard the schoolmaster was living. John was thinking of the demure

little Hannah fully as much as he was of the schoolmaster, and wondering whether he would have a glimpse of her or not. He was compelled to confess to himself that it was the thought of her, more than of the master, which had made him yield to the wish of the boys to return by the way of the schoolmaster's house. He knew that they ought to hurry back with the news they had gained, and yet, as the walk would take but a few additional minutes, he had yielded to his companions, against his own better judgment.

"He must live somewhere around here," said Joseph, "but this fog is so thick I can't see far enough ahead to tell."

"There's somebody coming right ahead of us," said Evart; "let's ask him where Schoolmaster Chase lives."

"We will," said Joseph, and he started to hail the stranger, when a cry of dismay fell from their lips, for the approaching stranger was none other than the Tory schoolmaster himself.

He at once had recognized the boys when he had come close to them, and all his previous rage came back again.

Without a word he started for them, and the boys without thinking of the power which lay in their superior numbers, and with the former feeling of respect for his office still present, started on the run.

The schoolmaster pursued them, and they heard

him call out, "Sic 'em, Tige! Sic 'em!" and then they knew that the savage dog, which he had kept in Elizabeth Town, was with him on Staten Island.

They ran as rapidly as they could, but hearing the voices of men ahead of them also, they turned quickly into the bushes by the roadside, and leaping across the little brook which flowed there, they waited for the approach of the enemy. The dog showed no disposition to come over where they were, and they could hear the voices of the men in conversation. "It was right in here that they went, I'm sure," they heard one say.

"Well, they've probably gone away," said the schoolmaster, "or the dog would follow them."

The boys waited for a half-hour, and concluding from the silence, and the time which had elapsed, that it would be safe for them now to go on, they recrossed the brook and started again down the road. The fog was thicker than before, and they were in constant fear of losing their way. Suddenly they heard the sound of the dog again behind them and they once more started on a run.

"We'll run as far as we can," said John, "and then if the dog comes up with us, we'll have it out with him. We're not far from the boats and I think we can reach them."

They ran rapidly, and familiar as they were with the localities of the island, they soon came to the place where their boats were. They now heard the



"SIC 'EM, TIGE! SIC 'EM!"

dog close behind, and without a word they hurried on, and leaping into their skiffs were soon beyond his reach. But they had no sooner taken their places than they heard a cry from Evart: —

“I have n’t any oars. Come over here and take me in tow.”

“We have n’t any either,” replied Joseph in a moment. It was a sad predicament in which they found themselves. The tide was rapidly going out, and without any oars, in the fog which was so thick that Evart was soon beyond their sight, and out of the sound of their voices, they drifted on. They tried to paddle with their arms, but found they could make no headway. They called again to Evart, but as no reply was received they knew that he must have drifted far from them. They looked into each other’s faces with dismay, not knowing what they should do.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.

MR. SHOTWELL waited until late that night for the boys to return. With the approach of darkness the mother had become very anxious, and as the hours passed on her anxiety increased. Her husband tried to assure her that the boys would be all right, and that they had probably stopped for the night at the home of Joseph or Evart.

“That is n’t like John,” said Mrs. Shotwell. “He would have come straight here if he had n’t met with some misfortune. I know something has happened to him. They were altogether too young for the errand on which you have sent them. Poor boy!” and she began to weep.

The sight of her distress caused Mr. Shotwell to go around to the homes of the other boys at midnight, and to inquire whether they had returned and were passing the night there; but he found the same distress in the other homes which was in his own, although the friends had tried to persuade themselves that the boys must have gone home with John, and were spending the night with him.

Together the men went down to the creek, to the place where the boys usually kept their skiffs; but

when they found that they were not there, they knew the boys could not have returned.

Early the next morning Mr. Shotwell took a skiff and went over to Staten Island. He had not told his wife, but he had his own suspicions that Schoolmaster Chase might know something of their whereabouts, and he was determined to seek him out first.

He found him at his home and met anything but a cordial reception from the Tory. When he had stated the object of his coming, the schoolmaster assured him that he did not know where the boys were.

“Did n’t you see them at all?” said Mr. Shotwell.

The schoolmaster hesitated. He could not say that he had not seen them, for he had; and yet he did not like to confess to the angry man before him that he had set his own dog upon them. But little by little Mr. Shotwell learned that the schoolmaster had met the boys and followed them down the road on their way home.

“The last I saw of them,” said the schoolmaster, “was when they jumped into their boats and pushed off from the shore.”

“Then they must have started for home,” said Mr. Shotwell quietly.

“I have no doubt of that,” said the master, “and while I have no love for them, for they have made me trouble enough,” he added bitterly, “I feel sure

you'll find them over in Jersey somewhere, if they did n't lose their way in the fog."

"That's just it," said Mr. Shotwell quickly; "why did n't I think of it before? Yesterday we had the worst fog I've seen in years, and that's probably what's become of them — they've lost their way in the fog." And, glad to put an end to the unpleasant interview, he quickly left the schoolmaster's house and started on his return.

He was more anxious than he cared to acknowledge, even to himself, and yet if they had been carried out of their course in a fog, he trusted that they might have been drifted down the shore and landed somewhere along the coast. In that event they would probably be home by this time, and he pulled a little harder at his oars, hoping that events would prove the correctness of his surmise. As he walked up the street he fell in with Squire Jonathan Hampton, who walked along with him, telling him of the exciting events through which he had passed in the morning.

"They did take Woodruff's sloop," said Mr. Hampton, "and after they had gone to New York they did go down to Sandy Hook last night — I don't mean the boys, but these men we were watching. About dusk Captain Lee went to his berth and went to sleep, and at twelve o'clock they called him, and he with John Murray and some others sailed for Elizabeth Town. They stopped a little while at

Staten Island, but came on and reached Barnet's storehouse about one o'clock in the morning. They landed about two tons of bales and boxes and such-like stuff, which they 'd taken off the Beulah. Isaac Sears wrote me about it, and we 've traced the whole affair out. Sam Lee has made a deposition that he did n't know anything about what he was doing, and we shall let him off. John Murray says he'll give the Committee his check for £200 to build up the city hospital — you know we have n't had any such place since the old one was burned, and it's likely that we'll need one pretty soon, too. We're to keep the goods here, and Murray and Barnet are going to send in a petition to Congress for themselves, but what the Provincial Congress of New Jersey will do I don't know. I'm just as much obliged to you," he added as he started to leave Mr. Shotwell, "for what your boys were going to do, but we've had friends on the island, and there is n't a shrewder man in New York than Isaac Sears, and between them all we've had the affair pretty well ferreted out. But what's the matter?" he added as Mr. Shotwell made no reply. "Did n't your boys go over there?"

"Yes! that's just it," replied Mr. Shotwell, whose white face and anxious expression appealed very strongly to the man by his side. "I've been over there this morning and I've found out that the boys were there and that they left the island. I've traced them down to the time when they jumped into

their skiffs and started for home yesterday afternoon. That old Tory, Chase, who was schoolmaster over here for a couple of years, knows more about it than he's willing to acknowledge, I think. If he's made any trouble for the boys, I shall not let him off very easily."

"What time did they leave the island yesterday?" said Squire Hampton sympathetically.

"As nearly as I can find out," said Mr. Shotwell, "it must have been some time late in the afternoon."

"Oh, well they can take care of themselves anywhere," said Squire Hampton. "When I said that two of them only made a half a boy, I did n't mean what I said, for I'm sure they can take care of themselves, if anybody can."

"It's the fog I'm afraid of," said Mr. Shotwell. "It was very foggy when they started, and I never saw a worse fog than we had yesterday. If they lost their way in it, they may have been carried out to sea."

"More likely they were carried down the coast," replied his companion, "and I should n't be surprised if you found they had made their way home by this time. Perhaps they are there now, and you'll find them when you get there. I think I'll walk along with you," he added, "and see if my words are n't true, although you know 'a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country.'"

Mr. Shotwell did not reply to his words, and his

anxiety for the safety of the boys was not helped very much by the friendly words of his companion, whose judgment he usually very highly esteemed.

The men walked rapidly onward and soon arrived at Mr. Shotwell's home. When they entered, they found Mrs. Shotwell waiting for them. Her face was haggard, and her eyes showed that she had been weeping. She asked no questions, save by the eager look which she gave them when they came in. Squire Hampton tried to take the place of the comforter, and to assure his friends that the boys were capable of taking care of themselves, and that in all probability they had been carried by the tide somewhere down the coast.

"If that has happened to them, it was hardly to be expected that they could have returned by this time anyway. Besides," he added, "they may have been taken up by some coaster, and in that event it may be that they won't be home for a day or two yet; I shouldn't worry about them," he said. "They are strong and have had lots of experience on the water. They will be back pretty soon, I'm very certain," he added as he left them, promising to return soon, or to do anything in his power to assist his friends.

The parents became more and more troubled as the hours went by, and they passed another sleepless night. On the following day the news of the disappearance of the boys had spread throughout

the community. Many friends came in with their expressions of sympathy, and assurance of their hope that the boys would soon be at home again; but the day and the next one also passed, and still the wanderers did not return.

“We must do something,” said Mr. Shotwell finally to his wife, “besides sit here and wait for them to come back. They may be in trouble over on the island. I think I’d better make another visit over there. Squire Hampton will go with me, I know; and while it may not do any good, it certainly can’t do any harm. You’ll not leave the place, I’m sure,” he said to his wife as he left her.

She only shook her head by way of reply, for hope had almost left her, and she was sure the boys had been carried out to sea. There was a vision before her continually of the little boats tossed on the angry waves, and the frightened faces turning in every direction for help. The neighbors who tried to comfort her were as sadly puzzled as she was. The entire community soon was greatly stirred, and parties were organized for searching along the shore, and others besides Mr. Shotwell went over to Staten Island to seek for traces of the missing boys; but another day passed and not a word came.

Mr. Shotwell returned to his home, but brought no word of comfort. The suspense had become almost unbearable. Where were the boys? What had become of the triumvirate? Were they still

living? Had they been carried out to sea? Had they landed somewhere far down the Jersey coast, or had some passing schooner picked them up, or had they drifted helplessly on in the fog and been lost in the night on the ocean?

CHAPTER VIII.

DRIFTING.

WHEN John and Joseph found that they were drifting down the waters of Staten Island Sound in the fog, at first they had no feeling of fear ; but when they had called to Evert and found that in so brief a time he already had been carried beyond sound of their voices, and that the outgoing tide was rapidly sweeping them on, they began to think that their situation was much more dangerous than at first they had thought.

They had never seen a denser fog. Even in the little skiff in which they sat it was with difficulty they could see each other's face. The tide was running very strong, and when they realized that it was going out, their situation became more and more grave.

"Do you think we'll be carried out to sea?" said Joseph with a tremor in his voice which he tried vainly to conceal.

"I don't know," replied John soberly.

"Don't you suppose we might strike the Jersey shore somewhere?" said Joseph.

"We might if the tide turned pretty soon," replied John. "It's running so strong it seems as if it must be almost out."

“Let’s try again to make Evart hear,” said Joseph; and the boys united in a call which they sent forth across the waters; but in the silence which followed, no sound was heard but the lapping of the waves against the boat in which they were carried.

“Which way is north?” asked Joseph.

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied John dolefully. “Evart’s lost and so is our direction. It’s like walking around a room in the dark; you never can tell where anything is, nor find the door so that you can get out.”

The boys drifted on, and the turn in the tide for which they were waiting did not come. Several times they thought they were near boats, but no reply came to the calls which they gave; and again when they thought they were approaching the shore, the fog lifting for a moment, revealed to their eager gaze nothing but the waters on every side.

In this way they drifted on, and the darkness soon began to settle around them. The heavy fog had made their clothing wet, and, hungry and cold, their fears increased with the oncoming darkness. Their conversation soon ceased, and the monotonous lapping of the waves against the boat was soon the only sound to be heard.

Joseph, who was much more impulsive than his companion, quickly responding to a call for action and as quickly abandoning the course he had

adopted when discouragements came, soon stretched himself in one end of the boat, and John covered him with such wraps as they had brought with them. The rocking of the boat, and the deep stillness in the darkness of the night, soon made Joseph forget his troubles, and in response to a question which he had put to him, John remarked to himself in a low tone: "Well, he's forgotten it all! I only wish I could."

John tried to improvise a rudder, but his attempts failed; and even if he had succeeded, he would not have known in which direction to steer his little craft, as the points of the compass were all confused. Thoroughly discouraged and worn out by his useless endeavors, John several times found himself nodding; and, dangerous as such a course was, he slid down into the bottom of the boat, and covering himself with a heavy coat, was soon as sound asleep as his companion was.

When John was awake the next morning, the fog had nearly disappeared, and at first he had some difficulty in recalling the events of the previous day, and the situation in which he found himself.

He was stiff and sore, and at first he thought it would be impossible for him to move; but he soon determined that it was time for action, and without waking Joseph he sat up and looked about him.

Not a sight of land could he gain. The breeze

had been stiffening and the boat was rocking more than it had been during the night. The fog was nearly gone, and John at first was not certain as to whether the skiff was moving or not ; but tossing overboard a small piece of wood which he found in the boat, he soon saw that it was left behind, and then he knew that they must be moving quite rapidly, but in what direction he could not tell. The wind became stronger, and evidently they were being swept on by the tide also ; but John could not tell at first whether it was coming in or going out. Joseph soon opened his eyes, and plainly had as much difficulty as John in recalling the events which had led up to their present situation.

“Come on, Joe,” said John ; “it is n’t quite clear enough to see how far we are from land, but there’s a good stiff breeze blowing, and I think it must be toward the shore.”

“Well, let’s stand up and hold out our coats, and maybe the wind will send us ashore sooner,” said Joseph.

Both boys at once stood up, and stretching forth their coats found that the wind soon caught them, and the speed with which they were being carried forward was more than doubled.

As the fog lifted and the sun rose, they were certain that they could see land in the distance and in the direction in which they were being carried. They had little inclination for conversation, however,

and doggedly they held their places and found that they were rapidly approaching the shore.

"I don't know how we'll get ashore, John," said Joseph.

"Well, we'll try that after we get nearer," replied John. "What I'm after just now," said he as he changed his position slightly, "is to get the man in that boat ahead of us to notice us;" and he called his companion's attention to a boat not far away from them, but which seemed to be headed in another direction.

"Now, let's call out together," said Joseph, whose spirits returned in a moment. "When I say 'three' let's shout 'hallo!' together;" and the boys together shouted at the top of their voices, but evidently they were not heard, as the other boat kept steadily on its way.

Again and again they shouted and waved their coats, hoping in some way to attract the attention of the man who was in the other boat, but who as yet had not noticed their presence or heard their calls for help.

Again and again the boys called, and were almost in despair when Joseph said: "He's coming about; I think he's heard us. Now let's give him another and a loud one this time;" and once more the boys shouted as they had not done before.

It was plain that the man had become aware of their presence at last, and had changed his course

so as to come near them. The water was rough now, and the little boat was tossed constantly by the waves. Sometimes they almost lost sight of the approaching stranger and their hopes would disappear, but again he would be seen, and as they were certain that he was coming in their direction now, they waited as patiently as possible for him to approach.

At last the stranger drew near. They saw that there was but one man on board, and they caught a glimpse of his face as he looked toward them, evidently greatly puzzled at finding two boys adrift on the open sea in a little skiff, without oars or a sail.

The spray had washed over them so constantly since the water had become rough, that the boys were chilled through, and were so cold that they could hardly talk.

They managed to make the stranger understand the predicament in which they were, and with many an expression of sympathy he soon drew them alongside his own boat, and taking the little skiff in tow he received both the boys on board, and wrapping them in heavy coats, placed them in the little cabin below, and at once changed his course.

"I was going down along the shore," he explained to the boys, "but I've got a cargo sooner than I thought I should, so I'll just put back home with you and let mother look after you. Where are

you from?" but when he saw that the boys were almost unable to talk, he continued, without waiting for a reply: "I'm going into Great South Bay. My home's over by Patchougue. There, there, never mind," he said soothingly to the boys, "you'll soon be all right, I don't care where you came from, I'll send you back home all fixed up. Mother'll fix you, for she knows just how. Why, many's the time I've been out to my lobster pots, and come back home most as chilled as you be, and she's fixed me up right away. It won't be long before we get there, for the wind's right with us. 'Twar mighty lucky ye had the wind with ye, but I do wonder what you two youngers were adoin' out here in such a night as this, with nary a sail nor a oar. But there, there," he added, "you can tell me all about that by-and-by;" and he left the boys to give his entire attention to the boat, and it was not long before the skipper had brought her to the little dock which he owned, and had assisted the boys up to the little house which he called his.

A few hurried words of his to his wife explained to her all he knew about the visitors. She met him at the door and looked down upon the boys in such a compassionate, gentle way, that both of them felt drawn to her at once. She seemed to know just what to do, and it was not long before the boys, fed and warmed, were revived and their spirits rose again.

When John told the story of their adventures to Mr. and Mrs. Gaines, including that of their escape from the schoolmaster, he received many warm expressions of approval from his hearers.

“That’s just the trouble with them Tories. There’s lots of them around here, and they are n’t very good neighbors neither, but I’ve got a boy that lives up at Salem — that’s in Massachusetts you know — and he’s just told me about the great performance they’ve had near there,” said Mr. Gaines.

“What was that?” asked John.

“Why, it seems,” said Mr. Gaines, “that General Gage had heard that there was some brass cannon deposited near Salem, and so he sent a regiment of the king’s troops to seize ’em. They sent the troops to Marblehead in a transport, which apparently was manned just as usual. This was on Sunday, and between two and three o’clock in the afternoon, and most of the folks had gone to meeting. The first thing you knew the decks were covered with soldiers, and they loaded their guns and fixed their bayonets and landed right there, and started right off for the cannon. Some of the folks had suspicions that they were bound for Salem to get those cannon, so they sent some messengers ahead. Ye see these things were on the north side of the North River and they could n’t get over there without crossing a bridge, and a part of that bridge was a draw, so that they could let vessels go through ; but

the folks was a-watching, and when the first part of the king's regiment came they pretended to march farther down stream. They thought they might get most of the folks to go there, but it did n't work very well, for the people had turned up the bridge before this anyway. Ye see the soldiers, they pushed right on to the bridge without knowing that it had been turned up, and they were pretty mad when they found they could n't cross. Colonel Leslie turned round and ordered one of the company to fire at some men on the other side of the drawbridge, but Captain John Felt, one of the townsmen there, who had kept right along by the side of the colonel all the way, said to him: 'Ye'd better not fire; ye have n't any right to fire, and if ye do, ye'll all be dead men.'"

"What did they do?" said Joseph excitedly.

"Well, they did n't fire," said Mr. Gaines dryly. "It seems the colonel went back to the centre of the regiment and consulted with his officers, and then he said he'd hold his ground there and go over that bridge if it took a month. Captain John said he might stay there as long as he wanted to, no one cared for that. There were a couple of large gondolas there aground, and the men were going to scuttle them for fear the soldiers would use them. About twenty of the soldiers jumped on to one of them and tried to drive off the owner, but he cut a hole in the boat before they could do it. Then they

commenced to talk with the colonel, and asked him what he was after. He told them that he had orders to cross over that bridge and that he must obey them if his life was the forfeit, and they finally fixed it up so that he said that if they'd let down the bridge so that he could live up to the letter of the general's order, he wouldn't go over thirty rods from it; and as the Salem folks had been using the hour and a half in getting the cannon all right and out of sight, they let down the draw, and the soldiers marched over, and then marched back again."

The boys laughed and said: "That's about like some of the Tories in New Jersey. They talk more than they do, and a good many of them are perfectly willing to take either side, and if they think that's the one which is going to win, why, they're with that; and if the other, they'll side with them; but we want to start for home pretty soon."

"Well, you can't go to-day, boys; you're in no shape to walk, and that shell of yours is no good."

"Well, but we must go," said John. "Our folks don't know where we are, and my mother will be greatly frightened at our absence."

"I know that," said Mr. Gaines, "and I sha'n't keep you, but to-morrow I'm goin' to drive across the island, and then sail across the sound to New Haven, and ye'll get a chance there to catch a ride

to New York. Some time I 'll bring the skiff along and send word to you where I leave it, when I come to New York, but ye 'll have to wait till to-morrow before ye start."

The boys decided that there was nothing else for them to do, and so they agreed to the proposal of the kind-hearted man who had rescued them from their perilous position on the sea.

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEYING TO NEW YORK.

ON the following morning the boys started with Mr. Gaines to drive across the island. The road was rough and had been but little used, and the cold wind of the winter day made them glad to draw closely about them their heavy coats. They had but little conversation during their drive, and it was not very long before they had arrived at the other side of the island, where Mr. Gaines made arrangements to leave his horse and take a boat in which he was to sail across the sound to New Haven.

The boys gave him all the help that lay in their power, and the thought of going home again kept them bright and eager.

Mr. Gaines had many a story to tell them of the experiences through which he had passed, and of the doings of the Tories and the patriots. He read to them from Rivington's Gazette the indignant protest of some Tory who complained that the Boston papers would not publish his words, and who gave himself the warlike name of 'Belisarius,' and who went on to say that 'the high sons of liberty' consisted of but two sorts of men. The first of these

were the worthless poor, who were glad to have property destroyed, and the other was the ministers who, instead of preaching to their churches meekness, sobriety, attention to their different employments, and the steady obedience to the laws of Britain, belched from the pulpit 'liberty, independence, and the steady persistence in endeavoring to shake off their allegiance to the mother country. The independent ministers ever have been, since the first settling of the Colonies, the instigators and abettors of every persecution and conspiracy.'

The boys were greatly interested as Mr. Gaines read to them this little comment which the indignant Tory had made upon the tendency of the people, and started Mr. Gaines to talking more of the incidents and events of the times, many of which he knew so well, that were transpiring among the excited people of the Colonies.

"Tar and feathers are getting to be quite the thing, boys. The people of Boston repealed the act that allowed it, but the king's troops thought they'd keep it up, so one of the soldiers the other day saw an honest countryman asking where he could buy a flintlock. The soldier told him he could sell him one cheap, so the countryman bought it, not knowing that it was against the law to trade with the soldiers. Well, the soldiers then just took him and locked him up all night, and the next morning, instead of taking him before the magistrate as they

ought to, the officers condemned him without a hearing to be tarred and feathered. And so the soldiers took him and stripped him, and covered him with tar and feathers, and mounted him on a one-horse truck, and with a guard of twenty soldiers, with fixed bayonets and all the drums and fifes of that beastly forty-seventh a-goin', and with a lot of officers and negroes and sailors, they marched him up and down the principal streets of the town. Then they fixed a label on his back, on which they wrote 'American liberty, or a specimen of democracy.' And as if that was n't enough, they had their drummers and fifers play 'Yankee Doodle'! That's a good piece of work, is n't it, for British soldiers, who one time were the terror of the world?"

"Well, have n't we ever done anything of the kind? We ought to pay them back," said Joseph angrily.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Gaines; "it's very much the thing for both sides. The other day I heard about a man in Connecticut who was a rank Tory, and he'd been off somewhere and bought a goose. Well, he was coming home with that live goose under his arm, when he fell in with three or four of his neighbors, who were Sons of Liberty, and as strong in their belief as he was in his. The old Tory had a pretty wild time with them, and the other men got so angry at last that they made him march on in front of them, while they killed his

goose and painted him all over with tar, and then covered him with the feathers of his own goose, which they made him pick."

Both the boys laughed, and John said: "There's a man down in New Jersey who got it worse than that. There was an old Tory coming into market one day with a lot of chickens to sell, and he got into an argument with some of the men, and they stopped him and made him pick his own chickens. Then they used the feathers, and gave him a coat which they said would keep him warm, and if it did n't, they said they'd give him another one, which they'd make as hot as his words were."

In this way the boys sailed on, listening to the conversation of Mr. Gaines, and learning many things about the condition of the country which they had not heard before.

"There's a good deal of excitement," said Mr. Gaines, "all through Massachusetts. I hear they had a mob in Berkshire last summer that drove the justices from their seats and shut up the courthouse. They took Daniel Leonard out of his house at Taunton, too, and then fired shots into the house and made him leave for Boston."

"What for?" said Joseph.

"Oh, because they were such rank Tories in both cases, and the people have become very indignant at them, and while I don't believe in their poisoning horses, as they say they did Brigadier-General

Ruggles', still when men are ground down all the while they have to make some protest. They had a mob of about four thousand that gathered and made Lieutenant-Governor Oliver at Cambridge leave his house, and go to Boston for refuge; and then at Worcester about five thousand of them got together one day and would n't let the Court of Common Pleas set. They made all the judges and sheriffs pass up and down the two files of the crowd, and read their promise that they would n't hold court, about thirty times. They did pretty much the same thing at Taunton, and Middleborough, and Springfield, and a good many other places. People are getting pretty well stirred up, and there's no knowing when the end will be."

When the boys had crossed the sound and left the boat, as they approached New Haven they saw several men watching a man who was going through a military drill. An Irishman stood in front of him and was enjoying the spectacle greatly, and adding many words of his own.

The boys stopped for a moment and listened as they heard him say: "Arragh and begorra! The Britishers took me out of the ould home more nor eighteen years ago and, bedad! will I not meet wid the crowd when I see even the preachers a-larnin' how to fight wid de gracious sovereign."

The boys were the more interested as they noticed that the man who was going through the

manual exercises was a minister, and they waited a moment as they saw a man who was passing by, stop and take the preacher to task for his doings.

“Have you given up your spiritual for the soldier’s profession?” the stranger asked indignantly. But when the crowd, which had quickly gathered, began to shout and jeer, and he heard the words “tar and feathers” mentioned several times, he beat a hasty retreat, and the boys passed on.

“I’m going to take you to the tavern over here,” said Mr. Gaines. “It’s where almost everybody stops that’s going to New York, and mebbe you can get a chance to work your passage by helping some of these men drive their cattle.”

The boys laughed, and said they were willing to do that if they had to, but if they could get a chance to ride they should very much prefer it, as it would bring them home much sooner.

It was not long before a man entered with whom Mr. Gaines was acquainted, and who on the following day was to drive to New York. The boys made arrangements to go with him, and then turned to see how they might spend the intervening time. In the evening there was quite an assemblage of men in the tavern, and the boys listened with much interest to the conversation, which turned largely upon the problems of the times.

One man told about a caricature he had seen of some of the Philadelphia people who were unwilling

to stand with the others in their protests. It represented a lot of old women of the male gender begging for tea.

The company laughed as the story was told, and another told how the Virginians and the Marylanders were joining with the New Englanders very warmly, in withstanding the tyranny of Great Britain. There was one young man there who seemed but little older than the boys, but who, in spite of his youth, was one of the most eager of the men in the assembly. The boys learned that his name was Aaron Burr, and it came out in the course of the conversation that while his home then was among the hills of Connecticut, his early home had been at Elizabeth Town where they lived, and that he had grown up there, and that Tapping Reeve, the teacher of the grammar school, had fitted him for Princeton College, and afterwards married his sister.

He told the boys that his Uncle Timothy, the oldest son of Jonathan Edwards, had married Rhoda Ogden, of Elizabeth Town, and had lived there until 1771, and how he and his sister, when he was five years old, were left orphans, and had been taken into their uncle's home.

The boys left the company early in the evening, and went to the room which had been given them. Long before it was light, on the following morning, they had eaten their breakfast and started on their journey to New York. It was late on the second

day when they arrived, and they were in some perplexity as to what was best to be done.

“If we could only get across the North River,” said Joseph, “we could start for home at once.”

“But you don’t want to walk out there in the night,” said their companion. “You had better come and spend the night with me; there’s no knowing what may be going on in the city, and if you have to walk home, it will be a great deal easier for you to go in the daytime than at night. I’ll try and start you both in the morning, but this night you’d better spend with me.” The boys decided to accept his cordial invitation, and they went with this stranger to his home.

CHAPTER X.

FOUND AND LOST.

THE next morning, the boys noticed before they started for the ferry across the North River, a union flag with a red field, which was hoisted on a liberty pole at the Exchange. As they saw the people were assembling about it, they determined to wait and watch events. Some of the crowd also brought a large union flag with a blue field, and on one side was printed, "George III. Rex, and the Liberties of America: no popery." On the other side were the words, "The Union of the Colonies, and the Measures of the Congress."

Soon some of the officers, and several of His Majesty's Council, and also some of the Tories came to the meeting, and confusion at once arose, and for a time there was serious trouble threatened, but the chairman of the committee finally quieted the assembly, and they proceeded deliberately to discuss the appointing of delegates for the Congress.

The boys were greatly interested in the assembly, and the threatened riot was not altogether distasteful to them; but when they saw that all things were becoming quiet once more, they at once went down

to the ferry and arrived just in time to find a boat which carried them across.

When they landed upon the Jersey shore, they looked about to see what arrangements they could make for being carried to Elizabeth Town, but as they could find no parties going in that direction, they resolved to walk.

"It's only a dozen miles anyway, John," said Joseph. "Let's start off on foot. I'm in a hurry to get home."

"So am I," replied John, "and many's the time we walked double that distance when we've been chasing the rabbits in the woods."

Accordingly, the boys started forth at a rapid pace, and passed through the settlements that lay between New York and their home. When they had come to a little place called Bergen, they stopped a moment to rest beneath a tree in front of a house which evidently belonged to one of the prosperous families of the town. They had hardly taken their stand there, when the door of the house opened, and a young girl came forth and started down the street.

"John, did you see who that was?" said Joseph.

"Why, it's Hannah," replied John as he started down the street on the run, and soon overtook her. In the course of his conversation with her, he learned that the disappearance of the boys was known throughout all that community, and she told

him also of the visit of his father to the school-master on Staten Island.

“Master Chase is over here now,” said Hannah. “I don’t want you to meet him!”

“I’m not afraid of him,” said John boldly. “When I was in his school I tried to do what he wanted me to, but he’d better not try to use any of his authority over me here.”

“He’s talking of starting a school over here,” said Hannah; “and then, I suppose, we shall have to come here and live.”

“Oh, he never will move away from Staten Island. That’s the best place for traitors and Tories,” replied John.

“Well, he may leave us there,” said Hannah; “but he says he’s going to start a school over here. Oh, dear! I wish that girls could be as independent as boys can. I’d soon take care of myself without any help from him!”

“Well, why can’t they?” said John.

“Why, just look around and see,” said Hannah half-angrily. “If a girl likes out-of-door life, they call her a tomboy, if she ever does anything that they don’t approve. She has to keep her face tied up, for fear she’ll spoil her complexion; she can knit, and wash the dishes, and learn to spin and cook, and do samplers, and that’s about all she can do. They let her go to church three times on Sunday, and when they say ‘let’ they mean ‘make’ her.

She must n't go anywhere without an attendant, and altogether I think her life is a pretty narrow one;" and the little maiden spoke bitterly, and yet with a heightened color in her face that John thought became her amazingly.

Joseph meanwhile was approaching, and as he drew near, he called their attention to the figure of Schoolmaster Chase, whom he could see rapidly walking toward them.

When he saw who were there, the master's face grew black, and he acted as if he were going to strike them; but when he saw the boys were not frightened, he seemed to think better of his intentions, and without a word to them he called Hannah to come with him, and soon disappeared from sight up the street.

When they came to the bay they found a man who would carry them across, and they had hardly landed upon the farther shore before they became so impatient, and were in such eagerness to see their homes once more, that they started on the run up the old-fashioned street.

They had hardly gone half the distance before they met Squire Hampton, who looked at them blankly for a moment, and then stopped them.

"It's a good thing you've come home, boys. They've been greatly worried about you," said the squire.

"Well, we've come as soon as we could," said

John ; and he briefly told the squire of their adventures.

Once more the boys started on the run, and soon separated, each starting for his own home. When John drew near to his father's house, he saw his mother standing by the door peering down the street. John wondered if she knew he was coming and was watching for him ; but in a moment he knew that she could not have heard of his arrival, and so he called out her name. She started quickly, and John at first thought she was going to fall, but he was soon at her side and caught her in his arms. She said not a word at first, and only stroked his hair, and patted his cheeks, as John remembered she used to do when he was a little fellow and he had stood at her knee ; but, although she used so few words, he knew what she would have said if she could have spoken, and John thought he never had seen so glad a day in all his life before.

"I'm so glad you've come, so glad you've come," she kept repeating, "and so will your father be when he comes back. He'll be here pretty soon, too ;" and it was not long before Mr. Shotwell entered the room. He had already heard of the arrival of the boys, for the news of their coming had quickly spread throughout the town. But John thought he never had seen quite so tender an expression before on his father's face. He was undemonstrative, as all the men thought they were

compelled to be to support their dignity in those times, but his father on that day was unusually tender as he sat by John's side, and listened to the story which he had to tell of his experiences during the past few days.

He was especially interested in the report John gave him of the feeling in Connecticut, and when his son told him of what he had found out on Staten Island, in reply to John's eager questions he described to him what had happened to the rich merchant and his cargo, concerning which the boys had made their unfortunate visit to Staten Island.

"But this is a good day, John, and every one in the community seems to be your friend, and as pleased as we are that you are safely home at last. I shall have the dominie give public thanks next Sunday. I think Evart's people will be rejoiced too, for they have been very anxious."

"Evart," said John quickly, "when did he come? Is he home, too?"

"Why, did n't he come with you?" said his father.

"No!" replied John, "we have n't seen him since he disappeared in the fog off Staten Island. He seemed to be drifting down the sound the last we saw of him, but I thought from the way you spoke that he was home."

"No," said his father slowly, "I only thought he came with you. We will immediately go over and see his people."

So John and his father at once went over to Evart's aunt's, where his father and mother had come as soon as they had heard of his disappearance. It was a double disappointment to them after learning that the other boys had arrived safely at home, to find that no tidings at all had been received of their missing boy.

"I'm afraid he's lost," said Mr. Van Slyke. "He would have been home long before this if he had n't been."

"I hope he'll come yet, I hope he'll come," said Mr. Shotwell, though John knew from the expression on his father's face that he had small hopes of ever seeing the missing boy again. And when the days passed on, and no responses were received to the careful searches which were made along the shore, the conviction settled upon almost all of the community that Evart Van Slyke had been carried out to sea, and had perished in the fog.

The boys joined in these searches, and for many days would not give up their hope of finding at least some traces of their missing friend; but when no message was received, and not a word could be heard of their lost companion, they also lost almost all expectation of ever seeing him again.

The mystery of his disappearance was constantly with them, but the excitement of the times increased so rapidly that the boys, as well as the

men, found their time and attention filled. There were radical speeches to be heard, and a good many secret plans to be carried out, into which the boys were more or less drawn. They did not cease to think of Evart, however, but they had almost ceased to hope.

One day when they were at John's house, the boys saw Mr. Shotwell walking rapidly up the street, and when he had entered his yard, and noticed the presence of the boys, he beckoned to both of them to follow him, and together they entered his house.

"I've great news, great news for you, boys."

"What is it? Anything about Evart?" asked John.

Mr. Shotwell shook his head and only said: "I've great news, great news, if it's true, and I think it is. It's the greatest day that ever has been seen in my life."

The boys in silence, wondering what the cause of the excitement was, waited for Mr. Shotwell to begin, and soon were as excited as he was at the news which he had received.

CHAPTER XI.

EVART'S EXPERIENCE.

WHEN Evart Van Slyke found himself drifting down the waters of Staten Island Sound, at first he had not been frightened. He looked about him to see what he could do to help himself, and when he found that no oars were in his boat he had supposed of course that there were some in the other one, and had called to his friends for help. When he had received their reply, and learned that they were in the same predicament in which he was, he was somewhat startled, but not yet frightened.

He stopped a moment to begin to collect his thoughts. While he had no oars in the boat, there was almost no wind stirring, and if the fog should soon lift, he had no doubt he could make his way to the shore ; but when he had drifted on for some time, and at last realized that he was being carried quite rapidly out by the tide, and that his companions now were not merely beyond his sight, but out of the sound of his voice, his heart began to sink. Was there no help for him ? Would the fog never lift ? Must he be carried out to sea, and drift about for days till starvation came to him, or else his frail little craft should be overturned in the waters ?

The thought of such possibilities started him once more into action, and he shouted with all his strength for help, but not a sound came through the fog, which rapidly was becoming even denser than before.

As the darkness settled around him, Evart resolved that there should be no sleep for him that night, but that he would keep careful watch till the morning came. Several times during the night he thought his boat had drifted near the shore, or else was within the hearing of other vessels, but every time he found himself deceived, and he grew more and more sick at heart with each recurring disappointment; but at last the night was over, for all things come to an end, and with the rising of the sun, the fog began to disappear.

Soon Evart was able to make out the shore in the distance, but he was so far out at sea that he was almost hopeless of any help from that source. Still, he stood erect and for a long time waved his coat, but no one was in sight and his effort was unavailing.

He knew he was drifting, and that quite rapidly, by the wake which the little boat left. He thought it must be Sandy Hook in the distance, but he was not at all certain of his direction, and of course he could not tell what any of the land which he saw really was. He almost determined to let himself down into the water, and try to steer his little craft

ashore by swimming, but he soon gave up that project, as he knew he could live but a little time in the cold waters of that winter's morning.

What should he do? Not quite hopeless, and yet sadly perplexed, he tried to think of some plan by which he might save himself from the death which threatened him.

Meanwhile he drifted on and on, sometimes the shore appearing nearer, sometimes farther away; but Evart was certain that whatever the appearance of things might be he must be drifting out to sea. The sun climbed higher, but it seemed only to bring light and but little heat to the boy, who was thoroughly chilled by this time. His hunger and thirst had so increased that he was almost beside himself, and as the hours passed and no help came, and no prospect of any rescue could be seen, he became more and more discouraged, and was about to stretch himself in the bottom of the boat for the rest which his exhausted condition had now for a long time been demanding.

Just as he was about to slip off from his seat, he glanced behind him, and his heart almost stood still at the sight which met his eyes. Far away Sandy Hook, if it really was Sandy Hook, looked dim and distant; but between him and the horizon he saw a schooner that seemed to be approaching. Excited as he was, Evart noticed how rapidly she sailed. But would she see him? Could he attract her attention? He knew that now he was so far away that nothing he

could do would be likely to be seen on board of her, and yet the eager boy, almost frantic now in this last hope that had come to him, began to shout, never thinking that the sound of his voice could not be heard more than one third of the distance between him and the approaching schooner. His judgment soon taught him that he must save his strength, and wait until she was nearer before he tried to attract her attention.

He could see the water thrown up by her bow, and knew that she was sailing along at a great rate of speed ; and yet to the excited and anxious boy it seemed as if she never would come nearer, and more than once he questioned whether she had not come to anchor. But when she appeared to be only about a quarter of a mile away, and he was right in the line between her and the shore, he knew that his time had come, and standing upon the seat, balancing himself as best he could, he placed his hands about his mouth and shouted with all the power he could command. Then he waved his coat and his arms, and shouted again. This he kept up for some time. Would she never see his signals ? Had this last chance come to him merely to mock him ? Must he die out there alone on the ocean ? He thought of his home, and the tears began to run down his cheeks ; but he resolved to make one more effort, and again he shouted and waved his coat in his last endeavor to attract the attention of

some one on board the approaching schooner. Suddenly he noticed that she came about, and that a yawl put forth from her.

Were they coming for him? His heart almost stood still at the thought. Surely they were approaching, and he could see the three men who were in her now — one in the stern steering, and two who were rowing. He shouted once more, and this time he could faintly hear their answer to his hail. It was not long before they were alongside, and he was replying to their questions.

“Well, come aboard, shipmate. We’ll take you aboard the schooner,” said one of the sailors; and Evart, almost too exhausted to step from one boat into the other, was helped by the men, and hardly knew what he was doing or where he was going, before he found himself on deck in the presence of the schooner’s captain.

He knew that she was under way, and he also was dimly aware that she was going at a very rapid speed. He was conscious, too, that the captain had asked him some questions, and that he had replied to them as best he could; but it seemed to him he must be asleep when he heard the captain say: “We can’t land you. I’m sorry, but you’ll have to go along with us. We’re going to the West Indies, and for just how long I don’t know; maybe for only a few days, and it may be some months before we come back to the Colonies.”

"Yes," he said in reply to Evart's question, "perhaps I can send you back, if we don't bring you. There may be some sort of a craft putting out from there, and if it does, why, I'll try and get you a chance. But what you want now is something to eat and some sleep; and when you've had that, you come and see me again;" and he placed him in charge of one of the sailors, whom Evart followed, and after he had been rubbed by the rough but kind-hearted man, and his hunger had been satisfied, he stretched himself in the bunk and slept until the following morning.

Recalling then the captain's words, he at once reported to him, and in reply to his questions gave him a detailed account of the events through which he had recently passed.

"I have n't any love for those Tories, and I don't waste any affection on England myself," said the captain. "She has treated America in such a way that she has no right to expect anything from her, and I think if I can get the best of her I'm entitled to. But I suppose you'd like to do something to earn your passage, would n't you?"

"Yes," replied Evart.

"Do you know the difference between a sheet and a belaying pin?"

Evart laughed, and told him of his experience with boats, and the captain then said: "I need more men. I expected three more to come aboard before

we sailed, but they did n't show up, so I'll take you and I'll give you the same pay as I do the others."

"How much is that?" said Evart.

"I see you are a Yankee," laughed the captain.

"No, I'm not," said Evart. "I'm a New Jersey Dutchman."

"Well, that's all the same," said the captain, "for they used to say, when I was a boy, 'the fault of the Dutch was paying too little and asking too much.'"

It was n't often that a captain was so good-natured as the one who talked with Evart, and he noticed how much more intelligent the crew appeared, and how many more men there were, than was usually the case on board a coaster.

Evart agreed to go, glad of his escape from his perilous position on the ocean, and the captain turned him over to one who, he told him, would be his messmate, for further instructions.

"What are you doing? Where are you going, anyway?" said Evart to his new friend.

"Oh, we're bound for the West Indies, and we're going for business too."

"Well, but what is your business?" persisted Evart.

"If you're so particular and don't feel inclined to go along with us, you might just step ashore if you'd like to," said the sailor.

Evart looked all about the horizon, and as no trace of land was in sight he decided that he must

be guarded and careful in what he said. His only hope lay in the men who had rescued him.

"Well, what pay do you get?" he continued. "The captain did n't tell me."

"It's good pay sometimes and sometimes it is n't so good. It mostly pays better than farming and fishing though. The last time we were out we struck it rich then, but I've seen the time when we did n't," said his friend.

Evart was greatly puzzled, but he was too persistent to give up his questioning without another attempt to find out something about the boat on which he found himself, and which was sweeping over the waters as he never before had sailed in his life.

"What cargo do you carry? It does n't seem to me you have any," he said.

The sailor laughed and said: "We have n't much now, but likely we'll have more when we come back. It's a sort o' assorted cargo though, mostly rum and molasses."

"This is a queer kind of a craft," said Evart at length slowly. "Here you are sailing as I never saw a schooner do before in my life. You don't carry any cargo out, and yet you come back with good pay. What are you anyway, pirates?"

His companion laughed and said: "We don't look like pirates, do we?"

"No," said Evart, "you don't; that's true. It's

the best looking lot of men I ever saw aboard a boat ; but what is the schooner anyway, a merchant-man ? ”

“ Well, she deals in merchandise,” laughed the sailor.

“ Well, you have n't any cargo on board now,” said Evart sadly puzzled.

“ That 's so,” said the sailor with another laugh. “ I 'll tell you what I wish we did have,” he added in a low tone. “ I wish we did have a boatload of Tories. I don't think we 'd pick them up the way we did you if they happened to drop overboard. You 're no Tory, are you ? ” he added.

“ Nay, verily,” replied Evart ; and he told his friend of the experiences the boys had with the schoolmaster at Elizabeth Town and on Staten Island.

When Evart depicted the schoolmaster as he came up over the desk when the boys had driven the needle into him, the sailor slapped his sides and laughed loud and long, and insisted upon telling his companions also the whole story.

Evart did not know why, but he could see that he rose in their estimation immediately after the recital of the story, and when he told about the object of his visit to Staten Island, and how he and his companions had drifted out to sea in the fog, he received many warm expressions of sympathy and approval for his courage.

“ Never mind, never mind, you 'll soon be back

home again with money enough to make you rich as a lord," said his friend.

"What is it you 're doing anyway to get so much money?" said Evart as he glanced half-suspiciously from one man to another.

The men laughed, and one of them said: "You can see we 're not much sailors, can't you? We 're mostly fishermen alongshore, though here 's Ethan Cobb, your messmate, he never was any fisherman;" and the men all laughed at what they considered his excellent joke.

"No, I never had much luck fishing," said Ethan; "that 's true, but I could make more wooden nutmegs than any man in the Colony of Connecticut. But come on, my son, if I am not much of a sailor, I 'll be a father to you while you 're aboard this craft."

"Well, what is this craft?" said Evart once more, as he went below with his friend.

"Now, my son, take my advice and don't ask too many questions, and do just as the captain told ye. 'T ain't hard work ye 'll have to do, and best of all ye 'll get good pay; leastwise ye will if we have any sort of luck; but it 's about time to turn in now, and ye 'll find out soon enough all ye want to know."

Greatly puzzled, Evart followed the example of his companion, and as he was preparing to turn in for the night, he kept wondering what the strange boat was, but found no answer to his questions. He soon lost himself, however, and was fast asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

A LONG VOYAGE.

THE next day found Evart in his place among the seamen, if seamen the crew might be called. They were familiar with the water, but it became more and more evident that they were not professional sailors.

He rejoiced that he had been rescued from the death which threatened him ; but when he thought of his home, and how worried they all must be there, and of his companions, and whether they had been as fortunate as he or not, he had many sad and lonesome moments. What had become of the other boys? Were they still drifting about the water? But Evart, naturally a hopeful boy, soon came to the conclusion that they must have gotten ashore somehow, as there were two of them together, and they could help each other, and he began to give himself heartily to the work which he had in hand.

There had been times when, like almost every boy, he had thought he should like to go to sea, but that time had long since passed ; and while thoroughly familiar with the ocean, and accustomed to take voyages along the shore as he had been, it was

not the attraction of the work he had in hand now, but his gratitude for his rescue that made him soon become a valuable hand on board the *Eel*, for that, he soon learned, was the name of the schooner which had rescued him.

Ethan Cobb, his messmate, was very kind to him, and he soon found his life much more pleasant on board than he had ever dreamed it could be ; but he could gain no information about the mysterious boat, as to what her destination was, or on what errand she was bound ; but the crew were all jolly, and seemed to be filled with high hopes all the time of some good thing happening to them. The captain treated them with much more familiarity than was usual on board ship at that time, and was frequently addressed by some of the sailors by his first name.

More and more perplexed, and yet satisfied that whatever the object of the voyage was, it was nothing that he had to fear, Evart worked on and found the time passing more rapidly than he had ever known it to before.

He noticed about a week later, that a much sharper lookout was kept, and that all the men had a more eager look. Suddenly one day there was a great excitement on board. There was a sloop in the distance that seemed to be sailing very slowly ; it was evident that she was heavily loaded and was low in the water.

The Eel was headed in her direction at once, and the excitement on board became marked.

“What are you doing?” Evart asked of Ethan, near whom he found himself.

“You’ll soon see, my son,” replied Ethan. “Hold on to your patience, just as we’re going to hold on to that British tub over there.”

“What are you going to do—take her?” asked Evart excitedly. “I thought you told me you were n’t pirates.”

“No more we are, but men can sometimes be privateers without being pirates, can’t they?”

Evart gave a long whistle. “So that’s what you are, is it—privateers?”

Ethan laughed and said: “That’s about it. You see really we’ve got war with England now, and she’s been trying so long to force some of her goods on us, and make us pay those taxes she wants, so that she can live at ease while we’re grinding out our lives over here, that it’s only fair for us to let some of those goods come in without the taxes too, you see.”

Evart laughed and turned to watch the pursuit. As the Eel drew nearer, the other boat was apparently trying to exert all her powers to get away from her, but she made such slow progress and seemed to be so weighted down with her load, that she was no match at all for her swift-sailing enemy. All the men were alert now, and each vessel’s crew seemed to be watching the other.

“Ye’re not afraid, are ye, my son?” said Ethan.

“Afraid?” said Evart; “I hadn’t thought of that. Is there anything to be afraid of?”

“Well, ye see sometimes they don’t like to give up the goods without the taxes being paid,” said Ethan dryly. “It’s nothing but the taxes they care for, and that’s all we care for too;” and he slowly winked one eye, and pushed the tobacco in his mouth from one cheek to the other.

“Well, we’re getting nearer all the time,” said Evart.

“Oh, yes! It won’t take long to overhaul her,” said Ethan. “She’s loaded most too heavy, but do you see how quiet all the men are?”

“Yes! They’re too busy watching the chase to talk much,” said Evart; but he’d hardly spoken these words, when suddenly they saw the other boat drop from her sides some coverings she had, and then they saw the muzzle of a cannon. Before they could say anything to each other, a shot rang out, and they saw the ball go skipping along the water across their own bows.

It would be impossible to picture the consternation that at once appeared on board the Eel.

“Trapped, by Gosh!” said Ethan laconically.

“What do you mean?” said Evart, whose face was pale, and who was afraid of further trouble.

“Why, she’s just fooled us as slick as a whistle. If she’d been a Connecticut Yankee, she could n’t

'a' done it better — that's my native State ye see," said Ethan.

But the Eel obeyed the summons at once, and her progress ceased. They saw a boat put out from the sloop, and the men all stood by the rail watching it as it approached. An officer in the stern wore a uniform which Evart at once recognized as belonging to the British navy.

"Ye see it was just once too often we've tried it," said Ethan in a low tone to Evart. "A good many of these privateers have gone out since the trouble came up, and Old England has just set a trap for us, and we've walked into it like a fool woodchuck."

"I don't see the trap," said Evart.

"Why, look right over there and see it," said Ethan. "The reason that 'ere vessel sailed so slow, was because she's drawing those heavy weights behind. Nothing could sail with such a load as that dragging at the stern, and ye see she's got her portholes all covered up with that siding, and no one would have thought from her looks that she had guns aboard. She didn't have all her sails set, and was n't moving along at that 'poor dying rate,' as my aunt Susan used to say, for nothing; why, she just naturally drew us right on" — but their conversation ceased as the officer came aboard, and declared that they were all his prisoners, and that they would have to follow him to England.

"I've been lying around here several weeks waiting for you, and the only thing I'm sorry about is that you haven't any cargo," he said. "I'm going to send some men aboard; I'm not much afraid of your getting away from me," he said with a laugh, "but I think it will be a little safer to put somebody in charge of this prize, and we'll sail for England right away. We'll try not to part company before we get there, either," he added.

Accordingly some of the crew of the British sloop were transferred to the Eel, and she began to follow her leader on the long voyage across the ocean.

"What do you suppose they'll do with us when they get us over there?" said Evart to Ethan one day.

"Hang us," was the brief reply.

"Do you mean it?" said Evart aghast. "You don't really think they'll do that?"

"That's just what they will, for they don't make any difference between pirates and privateers; but they ought to know that it's almost war between the Colonies and England. They don't call it war; they call it treason and rebellion; and you know what they do with the men who have a share in that. Never mind," he added, as he saw how disturbed his young companion was at his words, "we may give them the slip yet. We sha'n't always live at 'this poor dying rate,' as my aunt Susan used to say."

Evart looked away toward the British sloop. It kept just about the same distance ahead of them all the time, but always within easy gunshot. The only restriction placed upon the crew of the Eel was, that at night all of them had to keep below. In the daytime they took their share in the working of the schooner.

Evart's thoughts were busy during those days. At times he almost wished he had taken his chances in his little skiff, and had never come aboard the Eel. He remembered how rejoiced he had been when he had been rescued, but the danger which threatened him now seemed to him to be even worse than that which had faced him before.

Suppose he should go to England and there be hanged as Ethan prophesied? The report would at last come back to his home, and the sorrow of his father and mother would be double. It would be bad enough for them to lose him, without having their grief intensified by such a disgraceful death, and besides they might think that he had voluntarily taken his place on board a pirate, for such he knew the English would report the Eel to be. How would they ever know that he had been rescued by her, and was a member of her crew only by chance, and not by choice? It certainly was a strange experience for a boy no older than he to be going through.

Whenever the darkness came, and he went below

he did not cease to talk over with his messmate numberless plans for escaping, but to them all Ethan would make no reply.

"Are n't you going to try to escape?" said he at last one night, more than usually exasperated at Ethan's silence.

"Not by any such fool plans as you talk about," said Ethan gruffly. "You talk too much, anyway. Youngsters were made to be seen, not heard;" and the sounds that came from Ethan's bunk soon showed that he was fast asleep.

The long voyage continued. The days were monotonously alike. When the storms came, the sloop kept closer to the Eel, but in fair weather she only remained within easy gunshot.

In this way they sailed on till more than two weeks had passed. No land had been seen, and Evart, who was full of his projects of escaping, had become more and more exasperated at the coolness and increasing silence of Ethan. What had come over the man? Was it the fear of being hanged? Had he given up all hope of trying to escape? He quoted "Aunt Susan" more frequently than ever, and her favorite hymns were almost the only words that he would say.

"Wait till you get to England," he would sometimes remark to Evart after he had made some new proposal. "You talk too much. Wait and see what they've got for us there;" and Evart, at last

convinced that Ethan was right, and that all the hope, as well as all the danger, lay before him in that land, soon ceased to talk of his proposals, and became almost as silent as Ethan, but his thoughts were busy even when consciousness had almost ceased, and he continually wondered what strange experiences lay before him in England, which every day was becoming nearer.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ESCAPE IN THE DARKNESS.

ETHAN COBB soon began to have some very strange experiences. For several successive days, apparently he would be too ill to appear on deck, and at such times Evart became his nurse and tried to care for his messmate. He was somewhat puzzled, and indeed sadly so at times, at the man who claimed to be ill, for when Evart had prepared for him his food, it mattered not how much of it he took to the sick man, it all disappeared, and the man's appetite seemed in no way to suffer from his experiences.

When Evart, however, ventured to remark upon this feature of his friend's malady the groans of Ethan Cobb redoubled in length and depth. The illness would last for a day or two, and then Ethan would come on deck again for about the same length of time. During these intervals he would appear more like himself, except that at times he would utter the melancholy groans in which he indulged so frequently when he was below. Evart found him one day, when he thought himself unobserved and alone, groaning in different accents and tones.

"What's the trouble? Do you feel worse?" said Evart as he approached.

Ethan only shook his head and made no direct reply, and his young friend was more puzzled than ever. Their conversation turned upon the exciting events through which they had passed, and the matter of privateering became the topic for the present.

“I don’t see what you wanted to do it for, anyway,” said Evart.

“Well, my son,” replied Ethan, “we did it to get a living, so to speak. Here is old England; she’s trying to rob us and we thought we’d simply stop it. We were mere benefactors of the British,—at least we wanted to be,—but she objected so soon that our plans fell through. You see all along the shore every few months we used to send down to the West Indies a cargo of lumber. We’d clear off the land and saw up the trees into lumber, and like enough build a boat out of that very timber; leastwise, we’d load her with it and send the whole concern down to the West Indies and trade her off for rum and molasses and some other good stuff. Since this trouble’s came up, for there’s been trouble ever since the Stamp Act, we’ve just tried to run in some cargoes without stopping to report, as it were. We’d sometimes get a cargo consigned to us, and sometimes we’d transfer it from one vessel to another, and for the last time or two we did n’t just stop to find out who the owners were. ’T was most a mortal sin for those fellows to do anything to help Great Britain

rob the Colonies, so we just took the responsibility off from them, you see."

"Well, I don't see," said Evart, "very much difference between a privateer and a pirate."

"Oh, well, you will when you get a little older," replied Ethan, as he drew a groan which seemed to come from the lowest depths of his soul.

"Yes," persisted Evart, "but what about those men that owned that cargo? Just suppose some man, who was a loyal British subject, should save up his money for a long time and invest it in stuff he was going to send to America, and you came along and took it all from him, what about him?"

"That would be a leetle hard," replied Ethan; "but I feel about it a good deal as I do when I go out to the barn on my place there in Connecticut to kill a hen. Now, I don't like to kill a hen, but my wife, she likes to cook 'em once in a while, so I s'pose I'll have to kill 'em. So when I take the axe and I stretch the poor thing, whose head I'm going to cut off, on the block, I'most always say to myself, 'Well, I'm sorry for ye, but ye did n't have any business to be born a hen. If ye did n't want your head cut off, ye ought to have been su'thin' else.' Well, that's about the way I feel about these fellows whose goods we took."

"That seemed to be about the way the men that took you seemed to feel, too," replied Evart.

But the days dragged on, and almost all the

change that came in their experience was the storm that every few days swept down upon them.

“ Maybe they ’ll lose sight of us,” Evart would remark to Ethan in some of these storms, but his companion would only shake his head, and when the weather had cleared, there, but a little way in advance, would always be seen the graceful figure of their British captor.

Ethan’s times of illness seemed to increase as their voyage lengthened. As they had no surgeon on board, and the officer in command only growled about what he called ‘the skulkers,’ the care of Ethan fell almost entirely upon Evart.

“ Don’t you feel bad, too?” Ethan said to him one day, and when Evart replied “ No,” he had noticed an amused expression on Ethan’s face, and it seemed to him that he slowly winked with one eye.

What was Ethan trying to do? Could he really be ill with such an appetite and the expression upon his face that often puzzled him? Evart was unable to decide whether he was really almost dead, or only shamming; but if the latter conjecture was true, he was utterly at a loss to account for his motive.

These were lonesome days for the young captive. His thoughts often were on distant scenes and people. His father and mother, his brothers and sisters, and his fellow-members of the triumvirate were often in his mind. Were the other boys still alive? He could not know, and as the weary days

passed, he became more and more silent, and lived apart by himself. He had but little to do with the crew, and the officers in command were always surly, and at times almost savage in their treatment of him.

But all things have an end, and even a voyage across the Atlantic in a small coaster must have a limit.

"Judging from the appearance of things, and the action of the officers, we've about reached the end of our voyage," said Ethan to him one day, "but I don't feel happy over it. Probably we'll stretch hemp, and the very thought of it makes me sick. I don't feel very well, anyway," he continued, heaving a groan far deeper than his usual one, as he turned on his heel and went below.

It was not long before an English harbor was sighted, and in spite of his haunting fear, Evart was greatly interested in the sight. He was surprised as he found Ethan again at his side, but he asked no questions, and his companion merely remarked: "I thought I'd feel better above."

The sight which particularly interested the young American was the large number of ships lying at anchor within the harbor. To him it seemed as if they were almost countless, and as they passed close by one which had specially claimed his attention, he was startled as Ethan suddenly swung his hat, and shouted as loudly as his lungs would permit him, to call the attention of some sailors who stood on the

deck of the vessel by which they were passing; but a savage blow on the head which made him stagger, dealt by one of the officers who had just approached, taught Ethan that a salute of the kind he had given, was not to be allowed in English waters.

It was now late in the afternoon, and when Ethan and Evart went below, Ethan remarked: "I'm just hoping and praying that they'll leave us aboard for the night."

"Why, what else would they do?" inquired Evart.

"Oh, they might shut us up in some jail. Very likely that's what they will do to-morrow, anyway; but I'm glad we've come to anchor just where we have, an' if they'll only leave us aboard for the night, I shall thank my lucky stars."

"What for? What do you mean?"

"Oh, don't talk, don't talk," said the loquacious Ethan, whose tongue was seldom silent except when he was asleep; "don't talk."

But when the hours passed, and they found that evidently they were to be left on board for the night, and all that Ethan had done was to resume his groaning, and no prospect of any deliverance had come, Evart was much more disappointed than ever he had been before. Must he be hanged as a pirate so many miles from his own home? Must his parents learn of his dying such a death, and never know that he was innocent of the charge which he was certain his captors would make against him?

And Evart again resolved that they should never know it, for he determined that he would not give his true name, and that if he died, his death should be that of a stranger, so far as his name was concerned.

"They'd a great deal better think I was lost at sea and drifted on to my death than ever to learn that I was taken up by some boat only to be carried to England and to be hanged," he often said to himself.

When he turned in for the night, it was not to sleep. He rolled and tossed, and tried to think of some possible way of escape, but no plan presented itself that seemed at all feasible. It seemed to him that it must have been about the middle of that night when he felt a hand laid upon his shoulder. He started up quickly, but a warning "Hush!" in a low whisper, made him at once silent.

The hand still rested on him, and for several minutes not a word was spoken, nor a movement made. The intense darkness prevented Evart from finding out whether the hand was the hand of a friend or not, and it seemed to him that nearly an hour had passed when he heard a voice, which he recognized at once as Ethan's, whispering in his ear the single word "Come."

"Where?" he whispered, but no reply was given, save a tightening of the grasp of the hand upon his shoulder.

Evart quickly resolved to take his chances, and as he started forth he heard the voice of Ethan as he again

whispered in his ear: "Take hold of my hand and follow me just as quietly and as closely as you can."

Slowly, almost inch by inch, they worked their way onward and at last stood where they could peer out upon the deck. It was so dark at first that they could scarcely discern anything, but after a little time they could make out the outlines of the masts and could see the watch. Gradually all things became clearer, and as the watch passed them, Evart quickly followed his companion's sign, and together they succeeded in making their way to a place behind some casks and coils of rope. There they crouched, and in breathless silence waited for future events.

The watch passed so closely by them that they could have touched him with their hands, but when he was gone, they crawled on again in silence. Evidently Ethan had some plan, but just what it was Evart could not tell, but he was determined to join in it, even though he was fearful that the end of it might be death for both of them.

They made their way slowly on, in the manner which has been described, until they came to the stern. There they waited, and Ethan whispered to his companion: "The fools left this yawl in tow; I noticed that there were some oars aboard, and we'll simply use the whole thing. You slide right down the rope by which they made her fast to the stern and get aboard the yawl. You'll probably get wet

some, and you may bump yourself a little when you strike the boat, but hang on whatever else you do ; it's life or death. Better be shot than be hanged. Now here you go," he said as Evart made his way over the side ; and, grasping the rope by which the yawl had been made fast to the schooner, he let himself slide down it.

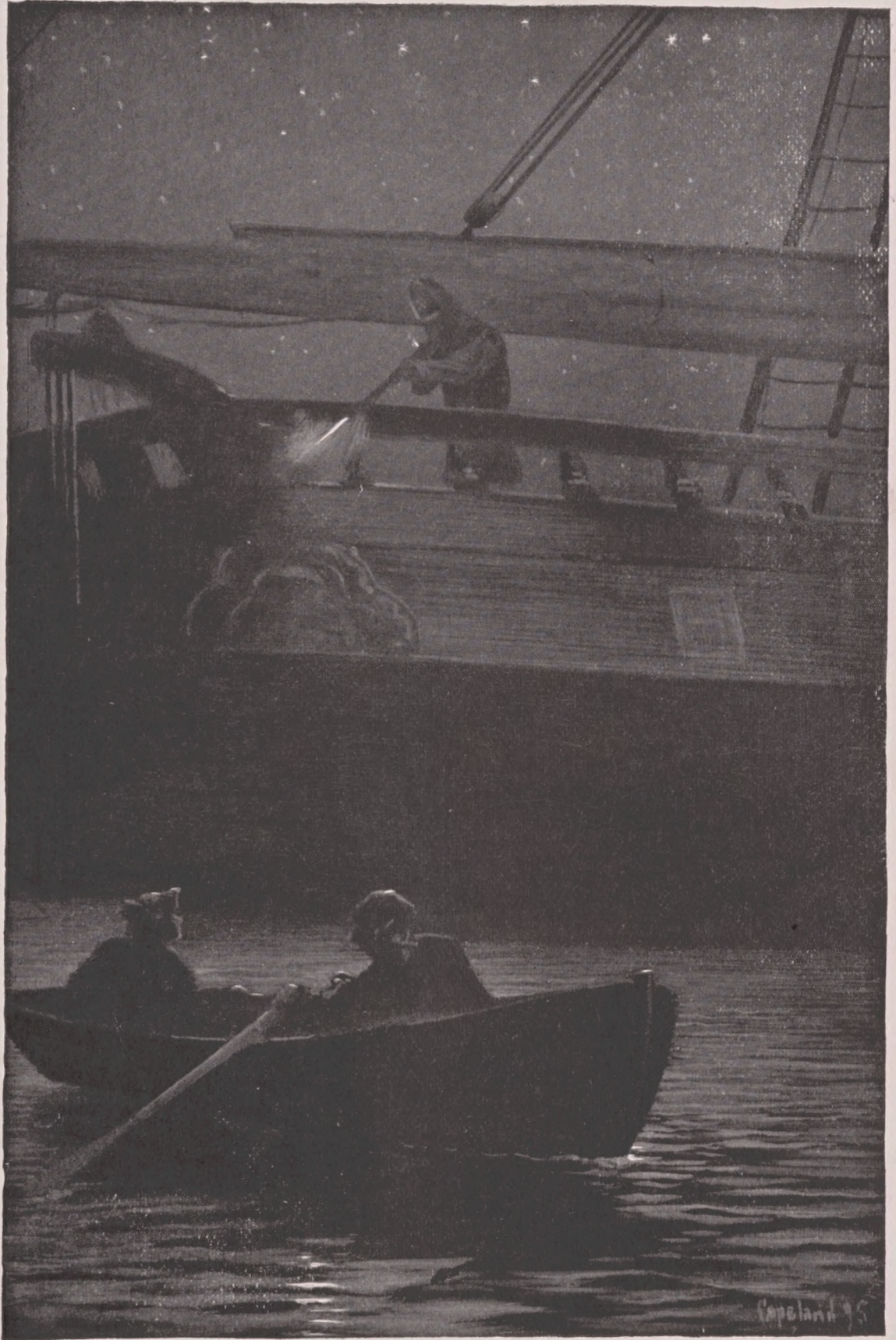
It burned his hands and he fell with a splash into the water. Remembering Ethan's words, however, he did not let go his grasp of the rope, and almost before he could get out of the water Ethan came down and was in front of him ; but in a moment they both had clambered into the yawl and Ethan had cut the rope. Just as he took the oars they heard a shot fired, as it seemed to Evart, directly over their heads ; but it went wide of its mark in the darkness, and Ethan, who was now pulling at the oars with all his might, soon left the schooner far behind them.

"Now if I only knew where that other schooner was, we'd be all right," he said.

"What schooner ?" asked Evart.

"Why, the Pilgrim, the one we passed when I yelled out so. I saw a lot of my friends aboard of her ; they're from Boston," said Ethan.

"Well, we'll have to try and find her before morning," said Evart, and they both turned to, to begin their search for the schooner, in the thick darkness of the night in that English harbor.



JUST AS HE TOOK THE OARS THEY HEARD A SHOT FIRED.

CHAPTER XIV.

EXCITING REPORTS.

WHEN John and Joseph stood before Mr. Shotwell in the room into which he had summoned them, they were greatly mystified. Something which had highly excited his father John knew must have occurred, for he had never seen him so stirred as he appeared to be that morning. On the previous day, which was Sunday, it had seemed to John that his father had been unusually thoughtful and had given unusual attention to the words of the preacher at the three services which he had attended ; and even yet he evidently was greatly excited.

The boys remained silent, waiting for the older man to begin, and at length he had quieted himself enough to say, " Boys, there has been a great fight. Word of it was brought to New York yesterday and has just come to us over here in Jersey."

The boys only remained silent, neither of them daring just then to show his feeling, and Mr. Shotwell continued, " Yes, there has been a great fight ; not so great in the numbers engaged in it, as in the effect it will have upon the Colonies ; for I verily believe that it means the beginning of a long and

painful struggle ; ” and then he proceeded to give the boys an account of the battle of Lexington, the story of which is doubtless already well known by all of our readers.

Mr. Shotwell told how the regulars had gone out from Boston, and had proceeded silently and with great secrecy to Lexington, and how just before sunrise they had come in sight of a company of eighty militiamen that had halted near the meetinghouse. The regulars were hallooing and yelling when they came within a few rods of the militia, and their commanding officer had called out : “ Disperse, you rebels ! ” and then the troops had yelled again, and shot at once in obedience to their officer’s command, and had killed eight of our men and wounded nine more, and then they all had laughed and said that the “ Yankees could n’t bear the smell of gunpowder.”

The regulars then resumed their march to Concord and divided up into parties and had gone on to the place where our stores were kept.

“ How did they know where they were ? ” asked John.

“ Why, every party had a Tory pilot,” said Mr. Shotwell. “ One party went into the jail yard and spiked some cannon we had there, and some of them went into a store and rolled out-of-doors a hundred barrels of flour. They unheaded a good many of them and emptied the flour into the river.

Some more of them then set fire to the Town House, and still others took possession — so says the report — of North Bridge, where there were about a hundred and fifty of the militia gathered, and the British fired upon them and killed two. Then our folks began to return the fire, and they made the troops begin to retreat, and they moved back to Lexington, both sides firing as they went.

“During this time word was sent to General Gage, of Boston, for reinforcements, and he had sent out Earl Percy with two field pieces and a lot of men. When they came to Lexington it was just as the regulars arrived there on their retreat, so they made a stand at once and picked up their dead, and took all the carriages they could find to put their wounded in. Some of them began to set fire to the houses and rob and burn, but our militia followed them almost all the way back, firing from behind the fences and trees — yes, all the way to Charlestown Neck. There’s a ship just arrived at New York from England, and the men on board bring a report that a large body of men are to be sent over from England, and that they are going to make the Colonies surrender their liberty and their property. I tell you, boys,” said Mr. Shotwell, laboring under great excitement, “those who refuse to fight deserve to be slaves.”

That night there was a great meeting in the Town Hall. A great crowd of men and some very

excited speakers served to bring the feeling to the highest pitch. In this the boys shared, and their voices were among the loudest in the shouts and songs that followed.

The Tories were silent for the time, for there was little for them to say, and in the crowd the boys thought they caught a glimpse of Schoolmaster Chase, but of this they were not certain, and when they came home late that night they had almost forgotten the occurrence. Not long afterwards, the word came that all communication between Boston and the country had been stopped, and that no one for the present was allowed to pass into or out of the city without special permission.

The governor had disarmed the people after he had given his word that the soldiers should not molest them, but the report also came that at Cambridge a large body of the provincial soldiers had gathered and that they were commanded by General Putnam. The soldiers were building trenches at Roxbury and putting up batteries.

"New York is stirred up, too," said Mr. Shotwell; and the boys learned shortly after this time that there had been put forth a petition signed by over a thousand men calling upon everyone to stand firm. "I don't think we shall have as much trouble here as they did in Boston, but we shall find some martyrs here, too, if I am not greatly mistaken," said Mr. Shotwell.

“Who was the first one killed for the cause?” asked John.

“Why, they say,” replied his father, “that most of the Boston people had determined sometime since that they would have nothing to do with the goods that England sent, and specially with the tea; but that some few of the Boston merchants continued to sell those things after all. One of them, who was named Theophilus Lillie, was very unpopular, and to show that his place ought not to be patronized, a lot of boys sawed up a pile of wood and raised up a pole right near the door of his store, and upon this they had written the names of all the importers.

“Mr. Lillie was very angry at this, and he had a friend, Lillie did, named Richardson. He tried to get a countryman to drive his wagon across the pole, but he would not do it, and then Richardson tried to pull it down himself. There was a big crowd there by that time at his store, and they began to throw stones and dirt at him, and drove him into Lillie’s house. Richardson was so mad that he was almost beside himself, and he rushed out-of-doors with a gun in his hands and fired it at the crowd. One boy named Christopher Gore was wounded, and another one named Christopher Snyder, the son of a poor widow, was killed. The crowd was more angry then than even Richardson himself was, and they just grabbed him and took

him to Faneuil Hall where he was examined and committed."

"What became of him?" said John.

"They found him guilty of murder, but the lieutenant-governor wouldn't sign his death warrant, so he was only shut up for about two weeks; but the death of the boy produced great excitement. At his funeral they had a lot of inscriptions on his coffin. I remember one of them was 'Innocence itself is not safe.' They marched with the coffin to Liberty Tree, where there was a big crowd, and from there all the people followed it to the grave. There were about five hundred boys at the head of the procession and about fifteen hundred people followed them. The bells of the city were tolled, and the newspapers called little Christopher the first martyr to the cause of American liberty."

"When was all this?" said John; "I never heard of it before."

"Why, it was on the twenty-second day of February, 1770.

The excitement in New Jersey continued and the boys were as much aroused as were any of the men. Early in May when they were in New York one day, they went with others of the people a little distance out of the city to meet some men who were coming from the East to attend the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. The roads were almost lined with people, and the delegates were escorted into the

city by some of the principal men of the place in carriages and on horseback, and by nearly a thousand men under arms. The bells were rung, and there were a great many things done to show their interest, and they placed double sentries at the houses in which they lodged their visitors.

“Who were the men from Massachusetts?” said Joseph to John, “I never can keep them straight in my head.”

“Why, John Hancock and Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams and Robert Treat Paine.”

“Well, I ought to remember that,” said Joseph, “for I knew that it was two that came from Connecticut.”

“No, it was n’t two, it was three,” said John with a laugh.

In a couple of days these men, with those who were to be delegates from New York City, started on for Philadelphia. About five hundred men crossed the ferry with them, and there were about two hundred of them that were under arms. The boys followed the procession as it marched through New Jersey till it came to Elizabeth Town where another crowd gathered to meet them.

But a few days more had passed before Mr. Shotwell had more and more exciting news. It seemed that a man named John Brown, from Ticonderoga, was on his way to the General Congress, and he told how about fifty men from Connecticut and

Massachusetts joined about a hundred from Bennington, and had gone up the eastern side of Lake Champlain and about eighty-five of them had crossed over the lake, for that was all they could carry with their boats, and that at about daybreak on the tenth they made their way into the fort at Ticonderoga. Then giving the Indian warwhoop they had at once secured it and everything it contained.

There were two officers and about forty privates that they took there, and they sent the prisoners down to Hartford. It took just about ten minutes to do all this, and not one was hurt on our side, and but very few on the king's side, and they got a lot of flour and pork and some guns. Of course Crown Point, where there was only a corporal and eight men, also fell into their hands.

A few days later the boys learned from John's father how Dr. Cooper, president of King's College in New York, had sailed for England.

"He's been for nearly two weeks aboard the King Fisher," said Mr. Shotwell. "He thought it would be wise to shelter himself there, for the people would have been rough with him, if they had caught him. It's strange that some of our most prominent men, who would reap the benefits before all others, if the Colonies did well, are among their bitterest enemies. I'm not sure but what we'll have to do as they did up at Worcester, where

I hear they summoned all those who were Tories to appear with their arms and ammunition. They knew enough to come, and they knew enough to give up their arms to the committee, too, when they were told to, and after they had been strictly ordered not to leave the town, or to meet together without a permit, they were allowed to go; still while we have some of the worst Tories around here, we have got some of the warmest patriots. Why, the people of New Jersey have simply taken all the money there was in the treasury of the province—pretty nearly thirty thousand pounds—and have said that they'll use it in sending troops to defend the liberties of America."

The times were full of excitement, and the boys lived each day in the hope that the morrow would bring a climax to the events transpiring about them, and each day did bring its own exciting story.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW EXPEDITION.

ONE of the features of the times that was especially pleasing to John Shotwell was the increasing confidence which his father daily manifested in him. Ever since his return from that disastrous visit to Staten Island his father had appeared to lose sight of his own dignity, and to come into closer contact with John and his young friend. This was so marked an exception to the custom of the times that John found his heart warming toward his father as it had never done before in his life. Many were the conversations which they had, and closer and stronger became the bond which united them.

"This word 'Yankee,'" said John one day to his father, "which I hear so many people call the Eastern folks by, what is it? What does it mean anyway?"

"I don't suppose any one knows exactly," replied his father; "but the common story is that when the New England Colonies were first settled, the people were obliged to fight with a good many different tribes of Indians. They did n't have much trouble with the most of them, but there was one tribe

named 'Yankooos' which it seemed as if they never could conquer; but the New Englanders persisted, and at last got the best of them. These Indians had the custom of giving their own name to their conquerors, so that the white people, who had at last got the best of them, were called Yankooos by them, and that gradually slipped into the other name — 'Yankee.'"

"The Synod of New York and Philadelphia have appointed the last Thursday in June as a fast day," said Mr. Shotwell one day to his family. "They are badly frightened at the condition of things in this country, and they also reckoned that they had better take the afternoon of the last Thursday of every month for public prayer. I like that idea myself, and we'll prepare to follow it out." But John's face showed that he was not over enthusiastic at the prospect of the day, but when his father turned to him and said, "I think, John, you'll have to go out on the farm for a few days and look after things there," he felt relieved, for taking his friend Joseph with him he always found made his stay at the farm one of the pleasant episodes of his life.

It was true that the weather was now becoming very warm and the mosquitoes were more than plentiful; still, in the tests of strength between the boys and the young men on the farm, and in the races and wrestling bouts which the boys on the

farm always liked to have with the boys from town, it brought many a pleasant recreation into the routine of farm life.

“My father was telling me,” said Joseph on their way over to the farm, “of what a big time they had down at Williamsburg, Virginia, when Peyton Randolph came home. He was the president of the grand Continental Congress, you know. They had cavalry and infantry, bands of music, ringing of bells and lanterns, and I guess something in their glasses that made some of their ears ring louder than their bells did; and my father says he does not care, except that he’s glad that there are so many people that feel that way about this country.”

“That’s so,” said John. “They tell me that that army at Cambridge is almost full too, and that lots of soldiers have come from Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, and that Providence has sent on a lot of stores, with some cannon and other things.”

“Yes; and I heard that General Gage had issued a proclamation,” replied Joseph, “saying that he’ll pardon in the king’s name all those who lay down their arms now and go about their business; that is, he’ll pardon everybody, except Samuel Adams and John Hancock. I guess they’ve committed what the dominie was trying to tell us last Sunday afternoon was the ‘unpardonable sin.’”

“I’ve heard about that proclamation of Gage’s,”

said John with a laugh ; “and there was something printed in The Pennsylvania Journal about it. I have got a piece of it in my pocket ;” and he took from his coat the piece of a doggerel rhyme, which he had cut from the paper, and read : —

“Whereas the rebels hereabouts
Are stubborn still, and still hold out ;
Refusing yet to drink their tea,
In spite of Parliament and me,
And maintain their rabble right,
Prognosticate a real fight ;
Preparing flint and guns and ball,
My army and the fleet to maul ;
Mounting their guilt to such a pitch
As to let fly at soldiers, breech,
Pretending they designed a trick,
Tho’ ordered not to hurt a chick ;
But peaceably without alarm
The men of Concord to disarm ;
Or, if resisting, to annoy,
And every magazine destroy —
All which, tho’ long obliged to bear
Thro’ want of men, and not of fear,
I’m able now by augmentation
To give a proper castigation ;
For since the addition to the troops,
Now reinforced as thick as hops,
I can, like Jenney at the Boyne,
Look safely on — fight you, Burgoyne ;
And now, like grass, the rebel Yankees,
I fancy not these doodle dances.”

“There was some more of it, but that is n’t here.”

“What he says here about ‘doodle dances,’” said Joseph, “makes me think of what my father told me the other day about this tune ‘Yankee Doodle’ that everybody is singing now. He says it was written way back when Cromwell was in England, and a loyal poet, who wanted to make some fun of him, wrote it out, beginning, —

“Nankey Doodle came to town,
Riding on a pony,
With a feather in his hat
Upon a macaroni.”

“I wonder what a ‘doodle’ was?” said John.

“That’s just what I said,” replied Joseph with a laugh, “when my father told me the song; and he said that a ‘doodle’ was a sorry, trivial fellow, and that a ‘macaroni’ was a knot on which his feather was fastened.”

“But our song is ‘Yankee,’ not ‘Nankey’; I wonder how that change came?” said John.

“Well, my father says that a surgeon in the British army up at Albany about twenty years ago wrote it that way to make fun of the New England soldiers who assembled there, they looked so green and awkward,” replied Joseph.

The boys remained at the farm a few days fishing, looking after the work generally, and enjoying themselves; but they were too full of excitement, and

they were too eager for news to remain away from home longer than was absolutely necessary, even to avoid the fast days which both the boys heartily disliked.

To their eager inquiries, upon their return, as to what had occurred during their absence, John's father told them how the Continental Congress had chosen Colonel George Washington of Virginia to be the general and commander-in-chief of all the American forces. "Some one said that Sir Jeffery Amherst said last year that 'with five thousand English Regulars he could march from one end of North America to the other.' When this was spoken of publicly in a coffee-house, I think somewhere, Colonel Washington, who was there, said 'he could stop Sir Jeffery with one thousand Virginians.' He'll have a chance to try it very soon, I think, and the British will also have a chance to learn whether the Americans are such cowards and poltroons as they claim to think they are."

It was not many days after this that the American army set out from Philadelphia, under the command of Washington and Lee, to join the forces at Cambridge.

John and Joseph were among the most interested of the spectators in the crowd that gathered to hail them as they approached Elizabeth Town, and the spirited appearance of the men, and the determined look of their leaders, made them hope that some-

thing might be done by such men, even against such a country as England.

They heard of General Washington's reception at New York the next day, but the greatest excitement was reached when the account came to them of the fight on Breed's Hill.

Bonfires, processions, excited speakers, illuminations, and crowds of boys and men everywhere hailed this news.

Several weeks passed in this way, reports coming now and then from the army, and the people becoming more and more eager as the days went by. It was about the middle of July when John was called by his father once more into his room, and again he knew by the expression of his father's face that some important news was to be given him.

"John, we're going to win in this fight and keep our liberties, but it's going to be a longer struggle than most of these men realize, I think," said Mr. Shotwell. "England has sent over some more soldiers, but nothing compared to what she will send a little later, and with such little wealth as we have over here, and such a lack of unity among the Colonies, a good many of these who are loudest in their professions of friendship now, will be the first to leave."

John waited in silence for his father to resume, as he well understood that questions on his part only served to irritate him.

“But,” resumed his father, “I think we shall win, because we have some men who take hold and never let go, but just now we lack powder more than anything else. If there’d been more of that, Bunker Hill would have been more of a success. Washington is suffering because of that lack now, and a lot of the men in this town have made arrangements to forward some to Boston. If we send it by the soldiers, that will only serve to attract attention to it and make our poverty here only the more apparent. We want to send it in such a way as to attract the least possible notice. How would you like to go as one of those who are to help carry it?”

John’s face flushed in a moment at the prospect, but he restrained his feelings as he knew there was nothing his father disliked more than rash and impulsive expressions.

“I should like to go,” he said at length very quietly, “and I should like to have Joseph go too.”

“So I thought,” remarked the father, “and I have already made arrangements with his parents for him to go with you. You are both to go; but, my son,” he added in a moment, “there are great dangers connected with this venture.”

John perceived how his father’s voice was softening, and his own heart responded to his words.

“There will be the British soldiers who may get word of it and make a great deal of trouble for you,

and worse than they are these Tory traitors who may try to blow up the powder and all the men with it, if they can't manage to steal it from you. It means dangers day and night for you, and yet I am more than willing for you to go, and am sure you will quit yourself like a man all the way between here and Cambridge."

"I shall try," said John in a low voice, as he and his father left the room to make their preparations for John's departure, which was to take place on the following day.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOSEPH'S DISCOVERY.

IT was arranged that both John and Joseph should go with the little party which was to carry the powder to the headquarters of the American army at Cambridge. Fifty-two quarter-casks had just been received from Philadelphia, and it was decided that these should be forwarded at once, and on the same day the active committee of the town passed the following resolution : —

Resolved, That this committee for every one hundredweight of saltpetre made within this town for the next three months after this date will pay the sum of twenty pounds proclamation money of New Jersey on the delivery thereof to this committee, and fifteen pounds of same currency for the like quantity of saltpetre made and delivered as aforesaid within the next three months thereafter.

The greatest secrecy was used in starting the little party on their journey, both because they were fearful of possible attacks on the way, and because many of the people of Elizabeth Town would be very sensitive at the removal of powder, which all thought soon might be needed at home.

The possible treachery of the Tories was also a further cause of fear, though the greatest caution

was used in the preparation for the departure. The casks of powder were divided and placed in two large wagons, and over them a lot of newly cured hay was thrown, and when the men started, their loads looked like those which the farmers daily were drawing from the fields.

Two men on horseback preceded the party, and behind rode John and Joseph, each on his own horse, as a rear guard, to give warning of any danger which might be approaching from that direction.

They journeyed on that day without any adventures, and at night they stopped at a little tavern in a small hamlet, somewhat undecided as to what arrangements they should make for guarding the material which they were carrying. Elias Terrill, who was in charge of the little party, soon decided that no guard should be left over the wagons.

"You see," he said to the others, "there will be less danger in having no guard left over them, than in having one. I don't think any one will suspect that they are anything else than what they appear to be, for they look now like nothing but hay which has just been cured."

"Some of us can sleep on the hay, if you want it," said John.

Mr. Terrill hesitated a moment, and then said, "No, I still think it would be best not to have any guard at all. Sometimes the surest way to arouse

suspicion is to act as if you are afraid, and a bold front has carried many a man through worse experiences than these. I think I'll keep an eye on things myself, however ; " and so several times during the night he arose from his bed, and went out to the place where the powder was, but he found no cause of fear, and the rest of the party slept soundly until daybreak.

Soon after sunrise they were again on their way, and before night they had arrived at Dobbs Ferry, where they were to cross the Hudson, and to strike out across the country for the headquarters of the army.

John was surprised when they came to the ferry to find that arrangements had already been made for transporting them. The hay was taken off from the casks, and the powder transferred to the boats which were in waiting, and the horses which they were riding were also ferried across.

On the other side of the river, teams similar to those which they had been using, were in readiness, and in a short time the journey had been resumed, the same line of march being observed which they had followed before.

The boys were greatly interested in the scenery through which they passed. The air was so much cooler and the country so different in its appearance from that in which they had their homes, that their attention was continually drawn to

many of the points of interest by which they were passing.

"My father said," said John, "that most of the great men have come from the hill country. I wonder why that is?"

"I don't know," replied Joseph, whose thoughts were not largely given to the matters of such import, but who was happy in the constant change of scene which they were experiencing.

"I suppose," said John, replying to his own query, "that we all of us are a good deal influenced by our surroundings; more than we think sometimes."

"Then maybe that's the reason Jerseymen are so active in this rebellion," said Joseph with a laugh. "We live in a country where the mosquitoes keep us on the move most of the time. I've got so that I can hit a mosquito about as easily as most men hit a barndoor."

John only laughed by way of reply, and the boys became silent, the monotony of their journey soon making itself felt. John did not cease to be watchful, however, for his father had cautioned him to be on his guard against the Tories, especially in the country where they then were, as it was reported that there were many of them in the regions bordering on the Hudson.

Late in the afternoon, as they were passing an old farmhouse, Joseph pointed to the long wellsweep

which could be seen in the yard near the house, and said: "Let's stop there for a moment and get a drink of water; I'm very thirsty myself, and I don't believe the horses will object to a good drink of cold water either."

John hesitated a few moments, and then calmly turned his horse into the yard, an example which Joseph quickly followed. They rode up in front of the house and dismounted, and Joseph stepped to the door to ask for the loan of a cup. Two women came to the door at his knock, and followed him out to the well. They had noticed the passing of the little party, and were curious as to their destination. The talk soon turned upon the condition of the country and the war which was threatening.

"I have five boys with Washington at Cambridge," said one of the women.

"I should n't think you'd want to let all of them go at once," said John.

"I only wish I had five more," replied the woman; "I'd give them all. The last word I said to them was, 'Don't get shot in the back.' I should feel as badly as any mother if anything happened to them, but in times like these I don't intend to have any of my boys backward in doing their duty by their country."

Her eyes flashed as she spoke, and the boys were deeply interested in her words. The other woman had nothing to say, and there was a scowl

upon her face all the time her companion was speaking.

"Perhaps we'll see them," said Joseph as the boys mounted their horses again. "We are n't quite so peaceful as we seem; we may have something with us when we get to Cambridge that will interest them or be of some use."

A quick glance from John made Joseph realize how foolish his words were, and he became silent in a moment. The woman who had had nothing to say during their conversation, had turned quickly at the words of Joseph and gone back into the house.

As the boys started to leave, the first woman beckoned to them to remain for a moment, and as she approached she said in a low tone: "I'm sorry you have said what you did. This woman who is with me is a very bitter Tory. She has been my friend and neighbor for a good many years, but this is the first time in a month that she's been in my house. She has felt very bitter about this struggle, and her husband and boys are as strong in their desires for the success of King George as I am for the success of the Colonies, so I wish you had n't said that, for I'm afraid of trouble now; but be on your guard and do not trust anybody and perhaps everything will turn out well after all."

The boys bade her good-by, and putting their horses in a gallop, soon caught up with their companions and resumed their positions as rear guard.

John was very sharp in his words to his companion, and tried to impress Joseph, who quickly realized that he had told something that he ought not to have mentioned; but he took his rebuke in a humble spirit, promising that his tongue should not get the better of him again. Nothing of interest occurred during the day, and the boys did not mention to the men the words of the women.

That night they passed at one of the country taverns in much the same way as they had passed the previous night, and bright and early on the following morning were once more journeying onward.

About the middle of that afternoon, two men passed them on horseback, and from the sharp looks which they gave the boys, they made them feel that their interest was more than a passing one.

"Shall we tell the other men," said Joseph, "what a fool I made of myself back there at the well, and what that woman said?"

"No!" said John, who was anxious to shield his friend; "not yet anyway. We'll keep our own eyes open, and if we see anything unusual, then we'll tell the others of it. Now they'd only blame you, and if nothing should come of it, why, you'd only be the sufferer." But an hour had scarcely passed before the boys saw the same men returning, and as they approached they brought their horses to a walk and tried to enter into conversation with the boys.

"Where'd you come from, boys?" said one of them.

Joseph looked at John to indicate that he himself would keep silence and leave the conversation to his friend. "Oh, over by the river," replied John shortly.

"What've you got, hay?"

"Can't you see," said John, "that we have n't anything, but our horses?"

"Yes, but the men ahead of you've got a couple of loads of hay."

"Yes," said John, "I know there are two loads of hay ahead of us, but the hay is n't mine."

"No, but you're all the same party, are n't you?" queried the men.

"I don't know what party you mean," said John.

"Oh, that's all right, that's all right," said the man with a laugh. "Likely enough we'll want to buy some. Got any to sell?"

"No," replied John as he started his horse into a trot, and soon left the men out of sight.

"Now's your time, Joe," said John at last. "You go ahead and tell the men all about it. These fellows who talked with us mean no good, I'm sure."

So Joseph started on and related all the circumstances to Mr. Terrill, but he only laughed at the report which Joseph brought, and assured him that there was nothing to fear. But that night when

they had put up at another tavern, while they were all sitting together in the public room, John suddenly called the attention of Mr. Terrill to a man whom he saw from the window. "That's one of those men," said John excitedly, "that talked with us to-day. They've passed us twice already, and their being here now does n't promise any good, I'm sure."

Mr. Terrill was more troubled than he cared to show, and when John proposed that he and Joseph should sleep that night upon the hay, he made no objection.

Accordingly, the boys took their blankets when bedtime came, and climbing upon one of the loads, made their arrangements for passing the night there. John was fearful, and accordingly they determined to keep a very careful watch.

Several hours passed, and a deep silence had come over all the place, and no signs of danger had as yet appeared. Suddenly Joseph, who was as watchful as his companion in his desire to redeem his mistake of the previous day, touched John upon the arm and in a low whisper said to him: "John, I think I hear somebody under this wagon."

John listened a moment sharply, and then said: "I don't think so; you're dreaming, Joe;" but even while he was whispering they saw that some one did crawl forth from under the wagon, and in the dim light they could see him as he started on a run

down the road. The boys called to him, but he made no reply, and soon had disappeared from sight. They were wide awake now and were watching for further events, certain that something exciting was sure to come.

“John, I smell smoke; I know I do,” said Joseph in a few minutes, and he had hardly uttered the words before a snap and crackle beneath them proved the truth of his words. The boys slid off from the load, thoroughly frightened now, and the sight which met their eyes was one to make even older men afraid. There, in one corner of the hay, not more than two feet above the casks of powder beneath, a fire had been kindled, and the boys suddenly realized something of the danger which threatened them.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOSEPH USES THE WHIP.

THE startled boys looked at each other in dismay. A fire surely was burning, and the danger which threatened was one which would affect not only them, but the tavern and all its surroundings; for if the fire once reached the powder, there would be an explosion which would carry death and ruin with it. Joseph had just opened his mouth to shout as loudly as he could, when he felt his companion's hand roughly laid upon his face. Joseph was angry, and excited as he was, he threatened to return the attentions of his companion with interest.

"Hold on, Joe," said John; "don't get mad, and don't call to the people yet a while. Here, you take this pail which is on the ground near the pump close by, and I'll hold this blanket over the fire. It has n't got to going yet so that we can't stop it if we work, and we'll have to work like Trojans. Come, go at it, don't waste any time," he added, as he took the blanket, and holding it over the place where the fire had started, threw himself upon it to hold it down.

"It's life or death, Joe, and more lives than ours are at stake, too," he said, as he saw the impulsive

Joseph take the pail and work at the pump as if his very life depended upon it, as indeed it did.

Pail after pail of water was poured upon the blanket and trickled down through the hay. The boys worked as men do in a sinking ship, or as those who are running for their lives.

Again and again they thought they had the fire under control, but soon it would start up when they were not expecting it; each took his turn at pumping, and at bringing the water, and whenever the fire died down they both worked at trying to tear away the hay with their hands and throw it from the load, and after a while they were satisfied that the fire really was out, and then only did they stop for a moment to take breath.

"That's what I call a close shave, Joe," said John.

"Close!" replied Joseph, "I should say it was. That beats drifting out to sea all to pieces. Why, when we were in that boat I never gave up at all; I knew we'd find some way out of the scrape; but when you've got a fire blazing within a foot and a half of a wagonload of powder, and you're right over it, that's something to make your hair turn gray."

"I've burned my hands," said John ruefully.

"So have I," said Joseph, "but I never knew it till you spoke of it. I think I must have some pretty big blisters there, too."

“Well, I’d rather have a blister on my hand than no head on my body,” said John. “We can afford to laugh, now the danger’s all over, at least, the danger from the fire, but what those men will do now no one knows. We’ll have to keep watch.”

“Well, we haven’t got anything to use if we have to fight anybody,” said Joseph, “except two pairs of sore hands and a whip. Another night when I’m on guard I propose to have a gun along with me. But what shall we do now? Shall we go into the tavern and tell the men about it?”

“No! no!” said John, “that would be to make five enemies where we have one now. We have got to fix this load too, for I don’t want any one to see that there’s even been a fire; but we can’t do that till it gets lighter than it is now. All we can do now is to keep watch and see if there are any signs of that fellow coming back again, or if any one else is coming to make a call upon us. I’m going to stay on this load and you go over to the other.”

“Now don’t go to sleep, Joe,” he added, as his companion left him to take his place, as he had directed.

The boys watched carefully, and several times were sure that they saw forms of men coming near them in the darkness, but each time they were deceived until it was nearly light. The darkness had just begun to give way, when Joseph was certain that he saw a man skulking by the barn, and several

times look over toward the loads. So certain was he of this, that he was not at all surprised when he saw a man who was creeping along and evidently approaching the load over which he himself was keeping guard.

Joseph had felt sleepy several times during his vigil, and had had to make an effort to rouse himself and keep awake. He was thoroughly awake now, however, and as he watched the man, who evidently was not aware of his presence on the load, he was undecided at first whether to call out to his companion, or to meet the stranger alone; but recollecting John's words as to his being prone to talk too much, he held his peace and waited for the man to come nearer.

When he was close by the load, and was evidently making preparations to do some mischief there, Joseph suddenly drew forth the whip which he had in his hand, to which there was a long lash of thick cowhide attached. Joseph was excited, and yet he laughed to himself as he thought of the work he was about to do. Quietly he drew the whip back and laughed aloud at the crack which came, when the end of the lash struck the man squarely in the face. He laughed again when he saw the man clap both hands over his eyes, and start on a run down the road as rapidly as he could go.

"Good-by! good-by!" called out Joseph; "come again!" but he received no reply, and John who had

been aroused by his words, came to the place where Joseph was, and joined in the laugh as his friend told him what he had done.

“That’s what comes from living in a mosquito country,” said Joseph. “Talk about your men living among the mountains, why, that’s nothing to the things one can learn when he has to fight mosquitoes. Why, if I had n’t practised picking them off with a whip, where would we have been now?”

“Why, we’d have been so far up in the sky that we would n’t have thought it worth while to come down again; at least, we’d have come down in pieces. They were just bound to set fire to these loads, were n’t they?” said John. “I wonder what Mr. Terrill will think about keeping a guard now?”

But it was daylight by this time, and the men of the party soon appeared. They washed their faces and hands at the pump, and when the boys quietly told them of their experiences during the night, they were warm in their praises, and yet were greatly alarmed at the danger which threatened them.

“We shall have to be doubly careful now,” said Mr. Terrill. “I don’t believe that those men will give up the attempt they have made, and we shall have to be on the lookout all the while. I don’t know these men when I see them. Do you think you could tell them if you were to see them again?”

“I think so,” said John.

"I think I shall know my caller," said Joseph, "if I meet him. I put a mark on him that I can remember as well as he."

The journey was soon resumed, and although the party was very watchful, nothing out of the usual line occurred until late in the afternoon, when a thunder shower which had been threatening for some time drove them for shelter to the horse-sheds of a little church near the roadside, by which they must pass. They had just gained its shelter when the storm was fairly upon them.

"I don't want the lightning to strike me," said Joseph, "with all this powder in here."

"If the lightning struck you," said John, "I don't think there'd be much left for the powder to blow up."

"No; only what the lightning did n't do the powder would. But what's that? It sounds like horses coming down the road."

"It is," said Joseph after listening for a moment, and soon two horsemen came to the place where they were, seeking shelter from the storm, which now had become terrific. The thunder rolled in almost a constant peal, and the flashes of the lightning were so frequent that they were almost blinded by its glare.

The two men who had sought the shelter of the sheds were in the stall next to the boys, and when the storm began to pass and the boys looked about

them it was a significant glance which they gave each other.

One of the men they had never seen before, but the other they thought they recognized; at any rate, the long, livid mark which he bore across one cheek made Joseph smile. He thought he recognized something of his own handiwork in it, and felt certain that the man before him was the one who had felt the touch of his whip on the previous night. The men tried to enter into conversation with the boys, and had many questions to ask as to who and what they were.

“Going to Boston?” said the man with the mark upon his face.

“Boston’s a good ways from here,” said John. “We sha’n’t get there to-day.”

“No! I didn’t think you would,” replied the stranger. “Besides, if you were to go there, you could n’t get inside. I saw a goldsmith yesterday, named Mr. Rolston, who managed to get out of Boston in a fishing schooner, and he said that there was great distress there. He said the troops did n’t have any beef, and that their malt and cider were all gone. He said if they did manage to get any fresh provisions, they had to give them to the sick and the wounded.”

“Where is this distress — among the people or the soldiers?” asked John.

“I guess none of them are very happy,” replied

the man. "He said that thirteen rebels who had been wounded at Charlestown, and were in the Boston jail, had died."

"Rebels? Who are they?" said Joseph.

"Why, the men who are fighting against their lawful king, and have brought all this trouble on the country," said the other man. "I'd hang every one of them higher than Haman if I had my way."

"Suppose you begin right here," said Joseph. "We're no Tories, and where I live we sometimes dress up the Tories in a good warm coat. It sticks to them too."

"Where's that?" said the other.

"Oh! down in Jersey," said Joseph; but a sharp look from John brought the flush into his face, as again he realized that his tongue once more was getting the better of him.

"Well, they're making it warm for the Boston people anyway," said the other. "They say there isn't a man that dares to be seen talking with his friend, and General Gage won't let one of them even walk in the streets after ten o'clock at night without a special permit from him. He's taken away all the molasses, and made it into rum for his soldiers; and he won't let anybody sell it unless he's loyal to the crown. The soldiers have a pretty hard time of it; they expect to be attacked whenever they appear on the street."

"They must be brave soldiers," said Joseph

impulsively ; “ they did n’t seem to like the Continentals at Lexington or at Bunker Hill, and now if they have got so that they are as afraid as the women and children in Boston, they must be in a bad way.”

“ Oh, well, we’ll not quarrel about it,” replied the other in a soothing tone. “ It’s reported that they’re going to leave Boston.”

“ Where will the tyrants make their headquarters then ? ” asked Joseph.

“ Oh, some say in Rhode Island and some say New York or Long Island. Any one of them is good enough ; but I wonder if your friends here will sell any of this hay ? ” His voice was smooth now, and yet the boys were more distrustful than ever of him.

“ You can ask that man over there, if you want to,” said John abruptly, as he pointed to Mr. Terrill.

The stranger at once entered into conversation with him, and offered nearly twice the value of the hay for the two loads, but as Mr. Terrill steadily refused to sell, and as the storm had now passed, the men soon left them, and the little party started on once more.

“ This is worse and worse,” said Mr. Terrill as he rode beside John for a little way, and listened to the report John gave him of the conversation the stranger had had with them. “ I’m afraid it bodes no good for us, but all we can do is to do the best

we can, and I think we ought to be able to match their cunning with our bravery."

"We'll try to," said John quietly.

"That's right, John," said Mr. Terrill approvingly. "I knew your father was not mistaken when he told us we could depend upon you; but this is very serious business, and a good deal more danger has arisen than I had thought of. If the powder is blown up there won't be even so much as a report of us left to carry back to Elizabeth Town;" and, laughing at his own joke, he left the boys and resumed his place in advance of the party.

That night when they put up at another little tavern it was arranged that the boys should sleep inside, and that two of the men should take their places for the night on the load; and thoroughly tired out from the vigil of the night before, the boys were soon in bed, and without much conversation they lapsed into silence.

It seemed to John that Joseph was asleep in a moment, but he was too anxious and nervous to fall asleep as his companion did. However, after a time he too fell into a sleep from which he was aroused, sure that some one was in the room. Without awakening his companion, he stepped out upon the floor and began to make investigations. Satisfied that no one was in the room, he approached the door and was startled as he found that it was fastened from the outside.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BLOCKING AN INCENDIARY.

JOHN SHOTWELL was alarmed at the prospect before him. It must be that some danger threatened, and that some one who knew of the boys' relation to the expedition, had taken pains to shut them out from taking any part in what might occur that night. He turned to the bed, and roused his sleeping companion.

"Wake up, Joe, wake up," he whispered, but it was some time before the sleeping Joseph was brought to his senses; but when at last he was thoroughly awake, he at once began to throw off the bedding and to take the rope, upon which the bed-tick had been laid, from the bedstead.

"Hold on, Joe; what are you doing?" said John.

"I'm going to fix it so that we can get out of that window."

"Let's try the door first and by pushing together against it we may be able to open it," said John.

"All right," said his impulsive companion. "We'll get out to the men anyway. I tell you this means business;" and he stepped to the door to try it.

What was his surprise as he pushed gently

against the door to find that it opened without any resistance. He turned to his companion and said: "You were dreaming, John. The door is n't fastened at all."

"Well, I'm sure it was," said John. "I don't understand it at all; you wait here a minute;" and he approached the door, and quietly walked along the hall into which their door opened.

As he came to the stairs he was startled at hearing the low voices of men who were evidently engaged in an earnest conversation there. He did not intend to listen, but when he caught the words "Chase" and "New Jersey," he did stop and decided that the conversation might have something of interest to him.

But listen as he would, the only words he could catch were "powder," "New Jersey," and "Cambridge"; and yet they were enough to deeply interest the listener.

Perhaps it was the knowledge which he himself had of the purpose of the expedition that made him suspicious of all men, and yet satisfied that the words which he had heard were not without some meaning for him, especially in view of the event which had recently happened, he went silently back to his room and found Joseph once more in bed.

"Any more ghosts, John?" said his companion as he entered the room. "I was afraid you'd go asleep out there in the hall and have some more dreams

that would disturb the tavern. The next thing you know you'll have King George climbing up the window, and come in, as the dominie said that last Sunday we were at church, 'like a thief and a robber.'"

But John, who was greatly troubled at the words he had overheard, made no reply to his companion's jest, and seated himself upon the side of the bed, where he remained for some time in deep thought.

"Well, John, if you aren't coming to bed, I'll have it all to myself, and all of the sleep too, so good-by;" and Joseph started to turn over upon his side, and to ignore the presence of his friend.

"Hold on, Joe!" said John, "I'm troubled. What do you think?" and he related to his companion, who now was wide awake and fully interested, the conversation he had overheard in the hall.

"What's the best thing to do?" said John.

"Do!" said Joseph. "There's no best thing at all. The only thing we can do is to go out there and tell the men there's something up, and that they've got to be on their guard;" and he began at once to dress, an example which John speedily followed.

As they left the tavern door and began to come near the wagons, which had been placed for the night near the barns, Joseph whispered to his

companion: "You don't suppose they'll shoot us, do you, thinking we're some one else coming?"

"No, I'm not so much afraid of that," replied John, "as I am that they won't be awake enough to shoot anybody."

"Ho! you don't suppose they'll be asleep, do you?" said Joseph; "that would be a good joke."

"Yes, it would be a good joke, especially when we can see what we can now;" and he called his friend's attention to the figure of a man he had noticed crouching and approaching the loads.

"There's two of them," said Joseph in a low whisper as they peered around the corner of the barn, behind which they had taken their stand.

"Yes," said John, "that's so, but there's only one trying to get near the hay. The other fellow's on the watch, I guess."

"Well, if we're going to do anything we have got to do it now," said Joseph; and even while he was speaking they saw a spark near the load, and they were sure that the man had evidently approached without attracting the notice of those who were supposedly on guard, and was already trying his flint and tinder.

"Come on, then," said John, and they started on the run with a shout. The man who had been on guard while his companion was trying to set fire to the hay, gave a warning call and turned and fled. The one who was nearer the load, startled at what

he had heard, glanced quickly about him, and also started to run, though in a different direction, as he took the road opposite to that which his companion had taken.

“I’ll go for him,” said Joseph, and disregarding the remonstrance of his friend he began to pursue the incendiary, the outline of whose form he could still see dimly in the distance. They both soon disappeared from the sight of John, who then turned to the men of his party who were on the loads.

They sharply denied that they had been asleep, and claimed that they were aware of what was passing all the time. John was very doubtful as to the truthfulness of their words, but he called to one of the men to follow him, and they both started after the impetuous Joseph, who had gone in pursuit of the runaway. They called to him as they ran, but heard no reply.

“That fellow is the greatest boy I ever saw,” muttered John. “He never stops to think before he does anything ; he does his thinking afterwards ; or, rather, he makes some one else do it for him ;” but he had hardly spoken these words before he stumbled over a prostrate form on the ground before him.

Startled, he stopped to examine it, and at once saw that it was his friend.

“Is he dead? Is he dead?” he called out, as excited as Joseph, whom he had just been chiding

in his heart for his impetuosity, could possibly ever have been.

His companion stooped over the prostrate form and after a hurried examination said: "No, he's not dead, and he's coming to."

His words were true, for Joseph regained consciousness at once, and in reply to the questions of his friends told them how he had followed the man, and had gained upon him as he ran, but that he had hidden behind a tree, and as he approached, the other had hit him upon the head with what must have been a heavy stick, he thought. He had n't stopped to examine, for he had lost consciousness at once; but aside from the bruise upon his head, he was certain that he had received no damage, an assertion which was soon proved to be true.

"I've a good mind to follow him up now," said Joseph.

"No. You're not going to do that," said John. "You've made trouble enough for one day; come on back to the tavern."

"I don't think we shall have any more trouble to-night," said Mr. Terrill, who had come out to the wagons, as soon as he had been summoned by the man who remained. "I want you boys to go to bed now and get rested. You've had no sleep for two nights, and I'll help these men guard till morning."

No one in the tavern had heard of the occurrence.

The entire party left on the following morning, and soon resumed their journey, Joseph being none the worse for his encounter, and John thoroughly rested by the sleep which he had had. No strangers were met during the morning, and Mr. Terrill, who rode part of the way beside the boys, told them a little more of the object of their journey.

“Colonel Washington,” said he, “as perhaps you know, on the fifteenth of June, was placed in command of the Continentals. I hope he can do the work, but he’s a young man to have such a responsible position.”

“Who had command before him?” asked John.

“Why, all the command there was, was that of Artemas Ward.”

“Who was he?” said John.

“Why, all I know about him,” replied Mr. Terrill, “is that’s he a Massachusetts man, and was graduated at Harvard College, and has held some important positions in the Colony. He’s been something of a soldier, and he’s learned something about the management of men, but it was of course better to have Colonel Washington in command.”

“I wish we could get into Boston,” said Joseph; “but that man whose face showed where I laid the whip the other night, said you could n’t get out or in there now.”

“I guess that’s so,” said Mr. Terrill, “but perhaps some time you can see it; it’s an old town.”

“How old?” said John.

“Oh,” replied Mr. Terrill, “away back in 1622 there was a little plantation begun at Weymouth (that’s about twelve miles from Boston), and then they began to explore the whole coast of Massachusetts Bay. They found a fine harbor that was shut in by a peninsula, which was marked for its three hills. I think the Indians used to call it Shawmut. That is the harbor and site of Boston. The English called the peninsula Tri-Mountain, but now they call it Tremont.”

“Yes, but what made them call it Boston, if they called it Tri-Mountain before?” asked Joseph.

“There was a preacher named John Cotton, who came from Boston in Lincolnshire, England, and it was as a compliment to him, I’ve been told; but I shall have to leave you now and go back to my place in the vanguard. Keep a sharp lookout, boys, and don’t let any one get the best of you. Be sure and let us know if any one approaches, and I would n’t keep too far behind either,” he added as he left them.

At noon the entire party stopped in a beautiful grove by the roadside, and prepared their noonday meal. They had finished this and were about to resume their journey, when they were startled by the sound of approaching music. They could hear the drums and the fifes, and every moment the sound became plainer.



"YOU CAN TELL NOW," SAID MR. TERRILL ANXIOUSLY.

“What’s that?” said Joseph.

“I don’t know; it sounds like music,” said Mr. Terrill.

“I know that,” said Joseph, “but what’s it for?”

“You can tell now,” said Mr. Terrill anxiously, as he looked down the road and saw a large body of soldiers approaching.

CHAPTER XIX.

RIDING IN THE NIGHT.

AS the body of riflemen drew near, the boys were impressed with their soldierly bearing and the size of the men. They all of them appeared to be so much larger than those who were in the companies with which they were familiar.

When the soldiers had arrived at the grove where our little party was camping, the place evidently impressed the officers as one that would be desirable for them to use for a similar purpose, and accordingly the body was halted, and as the men broke ranks they broke also into song.

The boys listened intently, and caught the following words of a song, which they afterwards learned was called the "Pennsylvania Song":—

We are the troop that ne'er will stoop
To wretched slavery,
Nor shall our seed, by our base deed,
Despised vassals be ;
Freedom we shall bequeath to them,
Or we will bravely die ;
Our greatest foe ere long shall know
How much did Sandwich lie.

And all the world shall know
Americans are free ;
Nor slaves nor cowards we will prove,
Great Britain soon shall see.

What ! can those British tyrants think
Our fathers cross'd the main,
And savage foes, and dangers met,
To be enslaved by them ?
If so, they are mistaken,
For we will rather die ;
And since they have become our foes,
Their forces we defy.

And all the world shall know
Americans are free,
Nor slaves nor cowards we will prove,
Great Britain soon shall see.

Our little party soon learned that the leader was Captain Dowdle, and that his men were those of a company of riflemen, marching from Yorktown, Pennsylvania, to join General Washington at Cambridge. The captain was a bold, loud talking man, and the boys were greatly impressed with his valor, and not many weeks had gone by before they learned that his talk was not all talk, but that he was willing to carry into execution many of the plans which he was so constantly proposing.

A pleasant hour was spent, during which all prepared their dinner and related their experiences to one another.

John and Joseph watched the men with some-

thing of a feeling of envy. They wished that they themselves might be able to join the riflemen, and when they saw the good times which the men evidently were having, they forgot the other side of war, so much more awful and true.

Meanwhile they observed that Mr. Terrill was talking earnestly with Captain Dowdle, but it was with no suspicion that they observed the captain leave him, and Mr. Terrill come to where they were standing.

"I have been talking with the captain, boys," said Mr. Terrill.

"He seems like a brave man," said Joseph; "I wish I could join him."

"He certainly is a very active man," replied Mr. Terrill; "I don't know how careful and safe he will be."

"You don't want a man to be too safe," said John; "there are some men who never will do anything because they are afraid they'll make a mistake. I'd rather do something wrong once in a while, than not do anything at all."

"I don't know but what you're right. I've come to about the same conclusion, for I've made up my mind to put the loads we're carrying under his charge."

"Won't you go on then?" said Joseph anxiously.

"Yes," replied Mr. Terrill, "but I don't think you boys had better go. There'll be nothing you can

do, and it may be only leading you into danger. There's a good deal of feeling around Boston I hear, and I promised your fathers that I would n't lead you into any trouble, if I could help it."

"Do you mean that we are to turn around and go home?" said Joseph.

"Yes, boys," replied Mr. Terrill.

"But we'll meet danger going that way alone," said Joseph.

"Not any but what you can get out of," said Mr. Terrill, smiling too, as he saw how disappointed both the boys were at the suggestion he made; but they could not argue the question with him, for boys were not to dispute with their elders in those days, and both had been told by their fathers that they had been placed under the charge of Mr. Terrill, and must obey him in all things.

"I know you'd like to go with us, boys," he continued, "but there really is no need of it, and I should n't be acting in good faith if I allowed you to go on. We've come three days from the river now, but on horseback, and without this slow load to keep you back, you'll make it easily in two."

It was in accord with this suggestion of Mr. Terrill, that as soon as the Pennsylvania riflemen resumed their march toward Cambridge, Mr. Terrill and his company, having in charge the two loads of powder, followed closely after them.

The boys stood and watched them until they were

out of sight down the road, and then mounting their own horses they set forth on their ride back to New Jersey.

During the afternoon of that hot summer day, they met no one, and frequently stopped in the shade beneath the trees by the roadside to cool and rest their horses.

Late in the afternoon they stopped at a little log-house which was approached from the road by a long lane that led through some clearings, and were fortunate enough to obtain some milk and eggs there. They found a cool spot by the roadside, and building a fire they soon were at work preparing their evening meal.

They knew that only a little farther down the road there was a tavern, and there they determined to pass the night, and accordingly, as soon as they had finished their supper, they started on again, and before it was fairly dark had arrived at the place which they sought.

Here there was a friendly welcome for them, and after they had seen that their horses were well taken care of, they sat for a little while on the piazza and listened to the talk of the landlord and the two men who, in addition to themselves, were the only guests; but soon tiring of this conversation, which turned mostly upon the prospects for the crops, they went up to their room and in a brief time were sound asleep.

It was early on the next morning when they prepared to resume their journey, and they were not specially pleased when one of the men, whom they had seen the night before, and who was also a guest at the tavern, made his preparations to start at the same time they did, and evidently was going in the same direction.

“You’re starting out pretty early, boys,” he said. “I’m going the same way, I guess, so we’ll jog on together for a piece.”

The boys gave only a brief reply to his words, for they were suspicious of all strangers, and they remembered the last words that Mr. Terrill had given them, which were that they were to mind their own business.

But their companion was an elderly man, and his face had such a kind, fatherly expression, that it was not long before the boys found their suspicions were disappearing, and they were interested listeners to the steady flow of words which he kept up.

“Almost everybody around here is afraid to express his opinion now-a-days, leastwise, lots of people are; but I’ve lived in Connecticut too many years not to feel free to say what I think,” said their companion as they rode on together. “We’ve plenty of Tories here, most like the huckleberries you can see on them bushes,” he said, as he pointed to some on a rocky pasture near by. “I don’t

suppose we 've as many though as you have around where you live."

He chuckled as he noticed the glances which the boys gave each other, and said: "I don't blame you boys for keeping quiet, but I don't need any one to tell me that you live not far from New York. You never saw a Connecticut Yankee who could n't guess what he did n't know. I don't need to listen to your words very long without learning where you come from. I can tell by the way you leave out all the h's in the middle of your words. Still Connecticut's good enough for me, and I'm going to keep right on living here, and fight for it if I have to, too."

"Where do you live?" said Joseph finally.

"Oh, my home is at Hartford. You know the old Indian name for that is Suckiag. You know that and Wethersfield, only four miles away, were the first places settled in Connecticut."

"Who settled them?" continued Joseph.

"Oh, the Dutch from Nieu Amsterdam came up the Connecticut in 1633, and built a little fort near where Hartford now is. They still call the place Dutch Point."

"I'm glad of it," said Joseph laughing, "for I've a friend who is, or was, a Dutchman too."

"I could 'a' guessed that," said the Yankee.

"Of course you could after I said it," said Joseph.

"I always have heard," said John, "that the English built the first house in Connecticut."

"Well, they did," said their companion. "Just about the time when the Dutch came up the Connecticut, William Holmes and some other men from Plymouth Colony came up the river in a boat, and they had on board the frame of a house; and on the west side, right near Windsor, they built the first house. About two years afterwards, Rev. Thomas Hooker led a party, who lived while they were journeying mostly on the milk of a herd of cows, which they drove before them clear from Cambridge to the place where Holmes was. There were about a hundred of them."

"How'd the Dutch like that?" said Joseph.

"They did n't like it, and they had a good deal of trouble for twenty years, till Parliament finally took a hand in it, and that ended the Dutch so far as Connecticut was concerned. In 1639 the Commonwealth was organized at Hartford."

"Yes," said John, "and I've always heard they had some great laws too."

"Yes, they did; some people called them the Blue Laws; but they were founded upon the old laws the Jews had, that put a man to death if he worshipped any but the 'One Triune God,' or for false swearing, or for man stealing; and if anybody over sixteen years old cursed or struck his father, or for any one of a good many other things,

they put him to death. They never got their charter till 1662, and then they made the New Haven Colony a part of Connecticut. Charles II gave it, but he didn't know what he was doing; and when his brother James came to the throne he was a narrow-minded bigot, and he formed a plan for having all the New England Colonies give up their charters, and then he was going to make the whole northern part of North America into twelve provinces, and put a governor-general over the whole of it. Of course the people didn't like it, but King Jimmy didn't care, and sent over Sir Edmund Andros as first governor-general. That was in 1686, and he immediately told the Connecticut people to give up their charter, and made lots of promises which he never kept."

"Did they give it up?" said Joseph.

"No. In October of the next year, he came to Hartford with a lot of his soldiers, and he went into the place where the assembly was then in session, and told them to give up their charter. Some one brought it in and placed it on the table, and then all of a sudden the lights went out. There was a great scramble, and a shout from the crowd which had gathered outside. When the candles were lighted again, Andros looked all around for the charter, but he couldn't find it; he made trouble for a time, but when the king was driven off from his throne it changed everything in America too,

and the English decided that Connecticut had never given up her charter."

"What had become of it?" said John.

"Why, Captain Wadsworth that night when they blew out the candles, he just seized it, and he took it out and hid it in the trunk of a great oak tree that grew in front of the house of Samuel Wyllys who was one of the magistrates there. I don't wonder some of the people here are pretty strong Whigs. Now they tell me," said their companion, "that New York is almost all Tory."

"That isn't so," said John. "My father says the people are all right. It's mostly some of the leading families that make up the traitors and Tories."

In this way the day passed on, and just at dusk they arrived at another tavern where their companion decided to stop for the night; but when the boys understood that only seven miles farther on, there was another place where they could stop, and receive good accommodations, they resolved to push on.

Accordingly they sent for supper, and after they had given their horses a rest, in spite of the fact that darkness was fast approaching, they started on once more.

They had gone but a little ways when the darkness deepened and the rain began to fall.

They could do nothing but trust to their horses. It was so dark they could scarcely see their hands

before their faces. Once or twice they stopped at a farmhouse and inquired the distance to the place they were seeking ; but each report seemed to make it farther, and it seemed to them that hours must have passed before they rode up in front of a little place which they called a tavern by courtesy, and from which at their "Halloo !" a man with a lantern came forth and took their horses to the barn. The boys entered the house and found a large number of men within, who were shouting and drinking, and who hardly noticed the entrance of the new-comers.

Under a chair on which one man was sitting, there was a large white bulldog, which laid back his ears and showed his teeth when the boys came in.

At first they were afraid of him, but he soon quieted down, and they looked carefully at the dozen or more men who were before them.

Suddenly John realized that one of the men was peering curiously at him. Across his cheek, in the dim light, John could see that there was a livid scar, and at once it flashed upon him that he must be one of the two men who had attempted to set fire to their loads a few nights previous ; but as soon as he had seen that John recognized him, he left the room, and the boys took the candle which the landlord gave them, and started to go to bed.

CHAPTER XX.

A SAD LOSS.

THE boys only partially undressed when they went to their room, for the sounds which came from below were not at all reassuring. More and more boisterous became the shouts of the men, and louder and louder their calls every moment. For a half-hour the boys sat there and listened; they were afraid for themselves, and fearful of the possibilities of the night. The little shower which had only begun before they had entered the house was becoming greater now, and the peals of thunder added to the confusion. The flashes of the lightning became almost blinding, and the shouts from the drinking men below were heard only between the peals of thunder. Sleep was something impossible, and the boys decided that they would not attempt it, for some time at least.

“I don’t like it at all here,” said Joseph. “I wish we’d stayed back there where that man did.”

“Well, I can’t say that I waste any affection on my neighbors,” said John; “but we didn’t stay back there, and we are here, and I don’t see but we’ll have to make the best of it.”

“I don’t mind the place so much,” said Joseph, as

he glanced ruefully at the bed, "but I don't like the looks of some of those fellows at all. Even that bulldog had a better expression than some of the men, and besides, I thought I knew one of those men and half-think he knew us. Did you notice it, John?" he continued, as his companion had been silent while he was speaking.

"Yes," said John; "I think I did, and it's the man that felt the end of your whip lash."

"That's what I thought," said Joseph; "and he did n't look at us as if he was wasting any affection on us either."

"I don't know why he should," said John.

"Well, what are you going to do?" said Joseph.

"Do? I'm going to do nothing just at present," replied John; "and if the other fellows will do just the same, I shall be perfectly contented. I wonder where they came from? They're a lot of country-men that make up about as rough a looking crowd as I ever saw come together."

"Do you know," said Joseph, "I'd like to have seen the schoolmaster put in charge of such a gang. I wonder if they would have come up when he yelled out 'Mark me! mark me!'"

"I thought he was the one that came up," said John, and both boys laughed as they recalled the expression on the face of the Tory schoolmaster when the darning-needle hastened his movements on the morning of the last of their school days.

“Hark!” said Joseph. “I believe there is somebody coming up the stairs.”

“Yes, there is,” said John in a whisper, when, after listening carefully, they heard the stairs creak and the sound of some one stepping stealthily along the floor.

The boys certainly were afraid. The men below had been drinking hard, and none of the faces were at all reassuring. Evidently they could expect but little help from that source if trouble arose, and the probability was that trouble rather than aid was likely to come from them in any event.

“I brought this club upstairs with me,” said Joseph. “I saw one of them had cut it for a cane, but it was right near the chair I sat on, and so I took it when I saw the dog giving us such a warm look when we came in, and I brought it upstairs with me when I came to bed. It is n’t very heavy, but we can make some use of it if we have to.”

“Hush!” said John in a low whisper. “He’s stopped right by our door.”

They waited in silence, and saw and heard the latch slowly lifted, but they had turned the button on the door; and when their visitor found that the door was fastened, he went on, and they could hear his steps as he passed down the hall.

“I guess he only wanted to make a neighborly call,” said Joseph.

“Yes,” said John; “he was too drunk to know

what he was doing. I don't believe the men are bad; they are only a party of rough countrymen, and when they get full of bad whiskey they are more apt to fall on each other than they are on any one else."

But brave as John's words were, he had made up his mind that for him there should be no sleep for the rest of the night, but he was desirous for two or three reasons that Joseph should become quiet, and so he urged him to go to bed and he himself laid down beside him.

The sounds which came from his companion soon convinced him that Joseph had forgotten all his troubles, and that not even the dangers which threatened them could keep him awake.

Satisfied at last that his friend was asleep, John arose and went to the window.

The moon was shining now, and the clouds had scattered, and the thunderstorm was over. The trees stood forth in the dim light and threw long shadows before them. Not a sound could be heard. Even the men who had been below had become quiet at last, and John was just beginning to chide himself for his feeling of suspicion, when he caught the sound of men coming around the corner of the tavern. Impressed by the sound, he waited and watched them as they came out into the moonlight and started towards the barn.

There were three of them, and John thought one

was the man whom he had recognized when he had entered the room below, but of this he was not certain.

He heard a growl from the dog as the men opened the door of the barn, but evidently the dog recognized them, as he soon became quiet, and the men were lost to sight.

John wondered what they wanted, and what they were going to do. He was beginning to feel sleepy in spite of himself, and his thoughts were strangely mingled. The picture of his father's house, and of his mother, as she had stood on the porch when he bade her good-by, rose before him, and then he thought of the two loads of powder with which they had started for Cambridge, and he wondered how Mr. Terrill was getting along. Finally, his mind turned toward Evart and his sad disappearance. He wondered whether Evart had been picked up by some vessel, or whether he had perished miserably in the ocean.

John shuddered as he thought of the possibilities of the long hunger and thirst which Evart might have been compelled to endure, and the picture came to his mind of some wave which might have overturned the little skiff in which his friend had been, and John thought of him as struggling for a few brief moments in the cold waters, and of some huge wave sweeping over him and burying him forever from sight.

But his sad thoughts here were interrupted by sounds which came to him from the barn. Four men were just shutting the doors, and he saw that they had brought forth three horses. He could only dimly see the outlines of both men and horses, and he remembered afterwards how the dog had growled as if he were not at all pleased with the appearance of things.

John watched them as three of them mounted and soon disappeared from his sight. The sound of the hoofs as they struck against the mud of the road, or an occasional stone, became fainter and fainter.

He watched the fourth man as he again entered the barn and shut to the door after him. He wondered what it all meant, and where the men could be going at that time of night, and whether they were going on any errand which concerned him and his friends or not; but his own eyes were becoming dimmer, and in spite of his efforts he found that his head was nodding from time to time.

Again and again he started up and strove to keep himself wide awake. He was determined that he would be on the watch till the morning came, and then, if the night were safely passed, that he and Joseph would depart before the rest of the men were awake.

He still sat by the window and watched the clouds as they scudded across the sky, and listened

for sounds which did not come. The crickets made the most of the noise, and John was startled once or twice by a moth which entered the window and drove slowly against his face. In spite of himself he was again nodding, and his head fell lower and lower, and the tired boy sitting by the window was soon soundly asleep.

How long he slept he did not know, but he awoke with a start, and saw that there was just a little streak of light on the horizon. He turned to the bed and roused Joseph, a work which took him several minutes, but when at last his friend was thoroughly awake, he said in a low whisper: "It's time for us to be going. We'll get something to eat before we start, if we can, but if we can't, we'll have to push on without it."

"Won't you wait to pay the landlord for our splendid lodging?" asked Joseph.

"I sha'n't wait to see him, but I'll pay him before we go; at least, I'll give it to the man in the barn, and he can give it to the landlord," replied John.

"That's all right," said Joseph. "He can't find any fault if he only gets his money, though I have n't any idea how much it will be, have you?"

"No, but the man in the barn can tell us, I guess. I'm more afraid of the dog than I am of the landlord just now;" and he told his companion of what he had seen as he sat by the window during the night. "But there's some one in the barn, for I

saw him go back and shut the door after him," said John, "and he'll hear us, or at any rate he'll hear the dog, and the dog will hear us if we rattle on the door."

Accordingly the boys went down the creaking stairs of the old tavern as carefully as they could, feeling half-guilty, and wondering if the landlord would think, if he should see them, that they were trying to escape without paying for their night's lodging; but no one was disturbed by their departure, and unmolested they arrived at the barn.

They found, as John had surmised, that the doors were fastened from within, and when they rattled them at first, no sound was heard, but when they repeated this with a little more vigor, the growling of the dog was heard, and soon the man they were waiting for came to the door, but he did not open it.

"Who is it, and what do you want?" he called out in a sleepy tone.

"We want to get our horses," said John. "It's time for us to start; we want to get a good piece of our journey done before the sun gets high, so just open the doors and give us our horses, and we'll pay you for our lodging and start off."

John was feeling quite elated. His courage had returned with the morning light, and now that they had succeeded in coming out of the tavern without attracting the attention of any of the villanous

looking men whom he had seen on the night before, he felt that his strength would be equal to the day.

“Come, hurry up!” he said; “what makes you so slow? Why don’t you open the door?” he called out to the man within.

The man seemed to hesitate, and the boys could hear him as he seemed to be muttering some things to himself, but in response to John’s queries, he slowly slipped back the bar and opened the door.

He appeared to be somewhat abashed as the boys entered, and the dog, which was sniffing at their heels unrestrained by his master, was becoming more and more threatening.

“Call off your dog,” said Joseph with a laugh. “He thinks we’re a bone, I guess. Well, I am about as dry as one, and hungry as a man can well be, but we’ll take our horses and start right away.”

The man called out to the dog, and Joseph pushed by him to go to the stalls in which their horses had been placed; but in a moment he came back to John with an exclamation of dismay, and a very rueful face.

“The horses are n’t here, John. They’re gone, as sure as you live.”

“Gone!” said John aghast. “What do you mean?” and he pushed past his friend and ran to the places where their horses had been stalled the night before.

Joseph’s words were only too true. The stalls were empty and the horses had gone.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ACCUSERS ACCUSED.

IT was a sad dilemma in which the boys found themselves. A hurried search through the barn soon convinced them that the horses had not been changed to other stalls, but that they evidently were gone. Joseph turned with an angry glance toward the hostler, and said: "Where are our horses?"

"I don't know," replied the hostler, "I did n't have nothing to do with it."

"But you were here all night," said John, "and they could n't have gotten away without your knowing it."

"I don't know anything about it," replied the man doggedly; "I can't tell."

"Who were those three men that came here in the night?" said John.

The man looked up quickly, as if surprised at John's question, but in a moment he resumed his sullen manner, and repeated his former statements that he knew nothing about it, and that he could not tell what had become of them.

"Yes, you do know," said John, becoming more angry every moment. "You let those three men take our horses, and you helped them get them, and

you shut the door after they went out, for I saw you. Men have been hanged for horse stealing before this, and if there's any such thing as a law in the land we'll see what it'll do for us."

The hostler, who was evidently a simple-minded fellow, was clearly frightened at the determined manner and the angry words of John, and began to stammer forth some kind of an explanation.

He was surprised at the knowledge which John possessed, and had not counted upon any such thing on the part of the boys as had just been presented to him; but his wits slowly gathered, and he fell back into his sullen manner and the one statement that "he knew nothing about it." John was satisfied that he had been taught this, and had been told to deny all knowledge of the horses when the boys should discover their loss.

"Well, I'll rouse the landlord and I'll tell him all about it," said John, "and we'll see if something can't be done. I saw the whole performance last night, and I know enough to convict you."

A grim smile crept over the face of the man at these words, but he only shrugged his shoulders by way of reply.

John turned, and just as he started back towards the tavern he saw the landlord himself coming toward the barn.

"Our horses have been stolen," said John angrily

to him, "and this fellow here helped the men who took them."

"Stolen!" said the landlord, "that's a pretty savage word. Horses don't get stolen from my tavern. Horses! You didn't have any horses when you came up here last night. Who saw you have any horses?"

John considered a moment. The only man beside the landlord who had seen them when they rode up to the tavern had been the hostler. Certainly the landlord was right when he said that no one else had seen them.

"But this man saw them," said John, as he turned to the hostler. "You saw them, didn't you?"

The landlord looked at the man in a way not at all reassuring, and smiled as he heard him say, "I couldn't see very well last night any way. 'T was awful dark. I don't just know whether I saw any horses or not."

The boys were too surprised to say anything. There they were, a good many miles from home, their horses were gone, and the man before them certainly stood in no friendly attitude towards them. The boys were not at all reassured as the landlord became more and more angry. They could not help feeling that his anger was largely assumed, and they were more than suspicious that he knew what had become of their horses; and as he talked to them

his voice became louder and louder, and his face more flushed.

“Stolen!” he thundered. “I’d like to know who says anything’s been stolen from this tavern. Such a thing has n’t happened here in years. It’s a fine story you’d get up about your coming here on horseback. You’re a precious pair of rascals, both of you. All you want is to get hold of some horses for yourselves. You’re not much better than horse thieves, either one of you. In fact one of the men in the tavern last night said he knew who you were, and what you were up to. He said you were ’round here spying out all you could, and were a-going to report whatever you could learn to Washington. I tell you, you want to get out of here, and just about as soon as I tell you, too. Tom, you might start that dog after them. Perhaps he’d help them to get a good start, who knows?”

His voice had become so loud that his last words were almost a shout. The boys were frightened. Here they were facing two men, and the dog worse than either. Their horses were gone, and they themselves were charged with being horse thieves and spies.

If other men were in the tavern, they were friends of the landlord, and they could look for no help from that direction, and their hearts were not made bolder when they saw the hostler about to follow the direction of the landlord, and begin to whistle through

his teeth — a sound which the dog at once understood, as he began to growl and approach the boys.

John glanced at his friend, and as they saw that matters were becoming desperate, they turned and left the barn and started towards the road; but the moment they turned their backs the dog had plucked up fresh courage and with a growl had started on a run after them. By good fortune Joseph had in his hand the heavy stick which he had taken to his room the night before, and which he had also taken with him without any thought as to its use, when they had gone out to the barn.

The dog was gaining upon them, that was evident. He was a savage fellow, and the boys knew that they were likely to have a struggle with him. They were quite a little distance from the barn now, but they still could see the two men standing in the door and laughing heartily as they watched the proceedings.

“Hold on, John!” said Joseph. “In a moment that dog’s bound to get at us, and I’ll just give him a dose of this hickory;” and they both turned and faced their pursuer.

He showed no signs of giving up the object he was chasing, and when he came within a yard of him, Joseph swung around his club and tried to hit him, but the dog was too quick for him and grasped

the end of it in his teeth. He stood there holding it a moment, his wicked little eyes gleaming with rage, watching for just the right opportunity to drop the stick, and seize the leg of Joseph; but John, without a moment's pause, had taken up a large stone and lifted it with both hands, and while the dog's eyes were fastened on Joseph, he had brought it down with all his strength upon the dog's back. With a whine and cry the savage animal relaxed his grasp upon the stick, and turned and began to crawl back towards the barn.

"You broke his back, John, and I don't think the man likes it any better than the dog does," said Joseph, for with a shout the men had started down the road towards them.

"Let's not wait for any talk with them," said Joseph. "They've got our horses, and let's get out of this before they get us too;" and the boys started on the run and soon left the men far behind them and out of sight. For a long time the boys ran, and when at last they stopped to take breath they were panting, and wet with perspiration.

"They won't chase us," said John, "I think; but we'll push on again in a moment, and leave them behind. I've got a few shillings in my pocket, and I guess we can manage to make our way home. One of them said we were n't over twenty-five miles from the Hudson, and if we can once reach that, the rest of the way will be easy enough."

No farmhouse appeared as they journeyed on for some time, and having started without any breakfast they began to feel very hungry. They stopped to pick some berries, and finding some cows in a pasture near the road, they helped themselves to milk, deeming themselves justified in the action as they had been engaged in their country's service.

Before noon, however, a farmer's wife, at whose house they stopped for a short time, had prepared for them a good meal for which she refused to accept anything as pay; and the boys started on again in better spirits than they had been that day. Their chief danger was passed, and their tramp through the country was an experience which meant little but pleasure to these strong and vigorous young men.

It was late in the afternoon when they came to a place where the road divided. Whether to turn to the right or to the left they could not tell. They waited for some time, hoping some one would pass, who could tell them the proper direction.

"There's no help for it, John, we'll have to draw cuts," said Joseph.

"All right," said John. "We can't go very far astray, anyway," and he laughed as Joseph prepared two sticks, one a trifle shorter than the other, and covering both with his hands, turned to John for him to draw one.

"The long stick means the road to the right, and the short one, the one on the left," he said.

"All right," said John, laughing as he pulled one. "Right it is, and we'll start at once."

And as the boys journeyed on, not at all certain, in spite of the drawing of cuts they had had, that they were going in the right direction, the road became rougher and rougher, and not a house did they pass for hours.

It was now becoming dark, the air was sultry, and the shower of the previous night threatened to be repeated. As the darkness increased, Joseph began to talk of the bears and the catamounts, which he had heard had frequently been killed among the Connecticut hills.

"Nonsense, Joe," said John, "it's only in the winter that they have trouble with them. In the summer time they never bother; they're all farther north then."

"Don't you think we'd better go back?" said Joseph.

"No, I don't believe we'd better do that. This road must lead toward the river any way, and we might just as well keep on."

They were now among the hills, and as they climbed their sides, the darkness of the woods was intensified. To make matters worse, the rain began to fall, and they could scarcely see the pathway before them. The flashes of lightning revealed to

them that they had been standing near a ledge, and for a moment they could see down into the deep ravine below them.

"If I'd have gone over that," said Joseph, with something that sounded very much like a sob, "that would have been the end of me."

"Do you want to give it up and stay here for the night?" asked John.

"No," said Joseph, "I'm almost wet through now. We have n't any blankets, and the trees are dripping on us all the while. Dear me! I almost wish I'd never come."

"Never mind, Joe," said John encouragingly, "just think of all the good that powder will do. Let's push on a little farther. I know it must be late, and even if we should pass a house, probably everybody would be in bed, but we might crawl into a barn and stay till morning."

But they'd only gone a little distance when suddenly John exclaimed: "Look there! There's a light ahead, so you see we're not lost after all."

"Seems to be a good ways ahead," said Joseph. "What is it, a brush heap?"

"No; I think it's a light in some house; but we can very soon tell," replied John; and the boys pushed on as rapidly as they could in the darkness over the rough road.

The rain was falling fast all the time, and in the flashes of the lightning the boys saw as they came

nearer the light, that there was a little clearing there, with a log house and small barn and corn-crib and one or two sheds near by.

"What do you think, Joe, shall we make for the barn, or shall we try the house?" asked John.

"Let's try the house," said Joseph; "I'm pretty well tired out."

"Well, I'm going to see what's in there first," said John. "I'm going up by the window and peek in;" and he left his companion to follow his own suggestion; but it was with a voice not at all reassuring that he told him, when he returned from his inspection, that the house was full of men.

"There are a half-dozen men there anyway," he said; and even as he spoke, from the place where they stood, they could see the door of the house open, and a man stand in the doorway and look out into the storm. The shouts from within reached the ears of the boys, but the door in a moment was closed once more, and nothing further could be heard.

"What are you going to do, John? We've had all we want to do with strange men in the past twenty-four hours, I think," said Joseph.

"I know it," said John; "but I'm hungry and tired, and if I can get anything to eat in there, I'm going to do it. Come on, we'll make a trial of it anyway;" and reluctantly his companion followed him, as he started for the door of the house.

CHAPTER XXII.

TOWED BY THE PETREL.

IT is time for us to return to the fortunes of Evart and his companion, Ethan Cobb, whom we left in the little boat, having just escaped from their English captors. The shot which had been fired after them did no damage and served rather as an incentive to Ethan, who held the oars, to exert all his strength. As a consequence the yawl was sent rapidly ahead, and soon the masts and spars of the schooner, which for several weeks had been their home, were left behind them in the darkness of the night.

It was full ten minutes before Ethan rested on his oars, and then he told Evart to listen with him and to try to learn whether there were any signs of their being pursued.

For a couple of minutes they waited there in silence, and Ethan was about to resume his task, when Evart in a low voice called upon him to listen again carefully.

There could be no doubt that the faint sound which they heard was that of oars in the oar-locks. Evart could not see the face of his companion in the darkness, but he divined at once his purpose, when

Ethan once more took the oars and sent the little boat out of its course, and among the many vessels that were lying at anchor in the harbor.

Their boat took its place beside another yawl which was fast to a sloop, and to any one who passed would present simply the appearance of belonging to that. Both of the escaping prisoners, as soon as their boat was made fast, stretched themselves upon the bottom and waited for events.

Evart kept his head out of sight all the time, but Ethan raised just enough of his face to enable him to see what was going on about him, trusting to the darkness for concealment.

They were not certain that they were being pursued, for it was more than likely that the boat belonged to some sailors who had been out for the night, and it did not seem at all probable that any pursuit of them would be made in a night so dark, and in a harbor where so many ships were lying.

At any rate, the other boat soon passed them, and after waiting for an hour, as it seemed to them, and no signs of its return having been seen, they concluded that they were not being pursued and began again their search for the schooner on which Ethan thought he had caught a glimpse of some men he knew.

For a long time they rowed about the harbor, and no sign of the schooner for which they were searching appeared. For several hours they continued

their work, using great care, as they knew that they might be mistaken for river thieves and might bring upon them the wrath of some watchful sailor.

At last it seemed as if the search must be abandoned, at least for the present ; and Ethan pulled the little boat out of the channel and sent it among the many vessels that lined the shore.

“ We shall have to give it up for a while, I guess,” he said. “ When it begins to get a little lighter we ’ll try it on once more, but you begin to see now what I was after, don’t you ? ”

“ Oh, I knew you were trying to get away,” said Evart.

“ No ; I don’t mean that,” replied Ethan. “ I mean when I was sick on board.”

“ No,” again said his companion ; “ only I thought your sickness was mighty queer. I never saw a sick man in my life who could groan so loud and eat so much.”

Ethan chuckled and said : “ That was just it. Ye see I was a-groaning so that they’d know I was in bad health, and if anything happened that I warn’t seen for a day or two on deck, why, they would n’t miss me so much ; and then all the while I had to put away all the fodder I could so’s to give me strength for my great exertions, which I was hoping soon to make.”

“ Then you were planning all the while to get away, were you ? ” said Evart.

“That’s just what I was, and I kept my eyes open to find the best plan to use. Well, last night when I saw those fools had left their oars in the yawl, why, I said to myself, that’s providential. They left them oars there for me.”

“Well, I’m glad you took me along,” said Evart.

“I thought it would n’t do to leave a homeless youngster like you behind; I thought like enough you’d get to pining for me, and the best way would be to fetch you along too.”

“Do you think the other men will all be hanged?” said Evart.

“I don’t know; it looks a little that way; but I’m going to look around some more in the harbor now. It’s too dark to see much; but I’d rather be doing something than lying here on my oars waiting for the Britishers to find us out and shoot us like a rat in a hole;” and acting upon his own words, he once more sent the boat out into the harbor and they renewed their search.

Up and down and in and out they went, peering at every vessel they passed, drawing in so close to many of them that they could see the forms and hear the words of the watchmen; but this search, like their former, was of no avail, and either Ethan had been mistaken when he thought he had recognized some friends, or the schooner had disappeared.

Ethan, however, insisted that both of these conclusions were wrong, and that as soon as it was a

little lighter he would have no difficulty in finding his friends ; but as their search in the darkness seemed to be unavailing, he soon decided that they must wait until it was lighter, and pulling out of the channel, he made arrangements for passing the remainder of the night. He insisted that his young companion should lie down in the bottom of the boat and get such sleep as he could.

Evart was touched with the gentleness of his words and manner, and complying with his request, was soon soundly asleep ; but there was no sleep for Ethan.

He was more anxious than he had been willing to acknowledge to his young friend, and was well aware that a crisis in their situation would come in the morning ; for he knew their escape then would be known, and that a careful search for the missing prisoners would be made. Whatever was to be done must be done quickly, and yet in the darkness there was little that could be accomplished. As patiently as he could, Ethan waited for the long hours to pass, and constantly was on the alert for any signs of danger. When the first faint streaks of the dawn appeared, however, he roused Evart, and once more they began their search for the friendly schooner.

“ I ’m afraid you ’ve made a mistake,” said Evart after a time, as still no signs of the object of their search appeared.

Ethan only shook his head by way of reply, and continued doggedly at his work.

Suddenly Evart in a low tone called the attention of his companion to a yawl, which was approaching, in which there were three men. Ethan gave a long and careful look at the boat in the distance, and as it came on, his shrewd observation made him say to Evart: "They're looking for us, as sure as you're born. Get down in the bottom of the boat. I'm going to put right in here where we are, and make fast to this schooner," said he, pointing to a vessel near them, on whose decks the men were already appearing, and evident signs of the boat's departure were at hand.

"I'm going to make fast to that other yawl they've got in tow," said Ethan. "I don't think any one here will notice us, and those men who are on the lookout for us will pass us by, unless they happen to recognize this boat."

Acting at once upon his own suggestion, the yawl in which they were was made fast to the little boat which the schooner had astern, and both men kept themselves out of sight. The sails of the schooner, however, were hoisted, and they knew that preparations for sailing at once were being made.

"What'll you do if they take us out to sea?" said Evart in a startled whisper.

"Why, that's the very thing I'd like just now,"

whispered back Ethan. "If they'll only get us out of the harbor, in half an hour we can take care of ourselves. I can cast off or cut loose then, and I don't care where she's going, we can get along all right."

Accordingly they both were still for more than a half-hour, and knew by the sound of the water against the side of the boat that they were being carried out to sea, for the waves soon became rougher, and there were many signs of their having left the harbor. But neither of them as yet had dared to lift his head, nor do anything that would make their presence known.

"They're going out with the tide, ye see," whispered Ethan, "and we might just as well go along with it;" but suddenly both were startled by the sound of voices of men who were talking in the stern of the schooner.

"Where did these two yawls come from?" they heard one say. "We had only one in tow."

"Blamed if I know," they heard his companion reply.

"Let's haul in and see," said the first speaker; and although they could hear no more words, they knew they were being drawn in close to the schooner.

It would be difficult to say who were the more surprised when the men looked down from the deck and saw in the yawl the anxious faces of Evart and Ethan looking up to them.

“Come aboard! come aboard! will ye? called out one of the men. “What are ye, stowaways?”

But Ethan would enter into no conversation with them, and requested to be taken at once into the presence of the captain, and acting upon his suggestion, they were brought before Captain McGill who was in command of the Petrel, which they afterwards learned was the name of the schooner.

Ethan determined upon making a clean breast of the matter, as he shrewdly suspected with the tide and winds which he had, that the captain would not send them ashore, and he trusted to his own good fortune to make things right with him.

The captain listened with surprise to the story which Ethan told him, and when he had finished, said: “Well, I can’t send you ashore, and I don’t believe you could make it in this wind, and with the tide against you, too;” and as if to confirm his words, the wind, which was increasing every moment, threw some spray into their faces.

“Well, you see we are British subjects if we do live in the Colonies, and we have n’t any ill-will against the government, but I’d like to be so bold as to ask what port you’re bound for?” said Ethan.

“We’re going to the West Indies,” replied the captain.

“All right, then, we’ll ship aboard, both of us, won’t we?” said he, turning to Evart.

Evart nodded his head in reply, as the captain

turned towards him, and said : “ We ’re a little short-handed and if you want to work your passage I ’ll let you do it. I ’ll see how well you do before I decide whether I ’ll hand you over to the authorities when we go ashore or not.”

“ All right,” replied Ethan cheerfully. “ We ’ll take hold and do the best we can ;” and he turned with his companion to follow one of the sailors, whom the captain had summoned to show them below.

Evart noticed as they passed along the deck that one of the sailors was watching them with a startled and surprised expression upon his face which was not at all reassuring. Evidently the sailor knew, or thought he knew, who they were, but when his companion showed no signs of recognition, Evart also passed by the man without a word, and followed Ethan below.

When they were by themselves, Ethan turned to him and said : “ There ’s one bad go for us here. We ’ve been lucky enough to get out of the clutches of the hangman, but did you notice that fellow who was watching us just now on deck ? ”

“ Yes,” said Evart, “ he seemed to know you, but you did n’t seem to know him.”

“ Well, I do know him,” said Ethan. “ Ye see I ’ve been engaged in what we call London Trading.”

“ I ’m not surprised,” said Evart, for he knew the

term as one which was applied to operations which some men who professed to be loyal friends of the Colonies were carrying on with the British. All the way from New London to Shrewsbury, light boats had been fitted out, and even though the men pretended to have no friendship for their oppressors, they were willing to have business dealings with them, although at first had only exchanged produce for English finery.

They used light boats, similar to those used by whalers, about thirty feet in length and fitted with from four to twenty oars, so that they could go both silently and rapidly; but even the honest trading frequently gave place to marauding, and they seized a good deal of property which did not belong to them, and became on the water what the "Cowboys" and "Skinners" were on the land in the South.

They did not draw a distinction between friend and foe, and took many things which did not belong to them. That which these men did was called "Whaleboat Warfare," and those engaged in it were not properly on either side.

Evart was not surprised to find that his companion had been somewhat engaged in that work, for the one quality which he always emphasized in himself and others was, "being shrewd."

"Yes," continued Ethan, "I had a hand in that 'London Trading' and 'Whaleboat Warfare,' and if ever I live to get home I shall go at it again; but

that man who scowled at us so as we passed him, I've met before and only a few months back, too. I had some deals with him in my 'London Trading' and he did n't get the best of the bargain, so I don't think he wastes any love on us."

"Do you suppose he'll make any trouble for us?" inquired Evart.

"Like enough, like enough, but it's better than stretching hemp in England, and we're nearer home too," said Ethan; "and as we've got along all right so far, I don't really think our luck will go against us yet," he said, as they went on deck together.

Evart stood by himself for some time and watched the low lines of the distant shore, which they were rapidly leaving, as they became fainter and fainter. The wind was with them and they were being swept rapidly onward. He remembered the words of Ethan, "that whatever they had before them it was better than stretching hemp," and with a brave heart he determined to make the best of it all, and in his heart he was thankful that they had started for the West Indies.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ETHAN'S ENEMY'S TRIUMPH.

ETHAN COBB was sure that the man had recognized him, and the expression which he had upon his face promised little good ; but when the days passed and both Ethan and Evart had fallen cheerfully into the routine of life on board the ship, Ethan tried to be friendly with the sailor, although for the first few days he was met only with rebuffs.

After a time he became less surly, and although he showed no signs of being friendly, he did not display the vindictive disposition which had made them fear him at first. But the days passed on and were without any events of interest. Evart tried to keep himself busy and soon made friends of all the sailors, and even the captain at times condescended to talk a little with him, and drew from him the story of his adventures.

The life was not one that Evart enjoyed, but anything was better than being hanged in England, and he knew that while he was not going directly home, he still would be nearer there at the end of his voyage than he had even dared to hope a few days before.

The men were all happy, and would sing much of the time as they were about their work. They were rough, good-hearted Englishmen, and received a treatment from their officers that to Evart seemed brutal in the extreme. Blows and oaths continually were given, but he soon concluded that this was what they expected, and in fact some of them seemed to be disappointed that they did not receive more. Some of the men seemed to measure the ability of the captain by the number of men he could knock down, and the life of the sailor of that day was anything but a happy one ; still the men seemed to expect no other treatment, and were evidently happy in their work and hopeful of the issue of the voyage.

There was a steady run of good days, and scarcely a storm came to roughen the water. The captain again and again declared that never in all his experience had he had such a trip before ; and several days before they had expected it they arrived at their destination at the West Indies.

Evart was greatly impressed by what he saw. He was familiar with the sight of negroes, for many of his own neighbors had held them as slaves ; but it seemed to him that he never had seen so many before, nor any that were so black as those of the West Indies.

When the boat had been made fast to the dock, Ethan and Evart decided that at once they would try to make arrangements to ship aboard some vessel

bound for New York. If they could find one, they were thoroughly satisfied to have received their passage from England in return for their services, and bade the captain good-by with hearts that were hopeful and glad. They were rejoiced to find that there was a boat that was to sail on the morrow for New York, and they had no difficulty in arranging for their passage on the same terms as those which they had made on their voyage from England to the West Indies.

“We sha’n’t get very rich,” said Ethan. “I more’n half-think the captain’s getting the best end of this bargain. That does n’t speak very well for a Connecticut Yankee, and yet if I once get back safe and sound I’ll make it up in a hurry, with my ‘Whale-boats’ and ‘London Trading.’ I don’t intend to be left very far behind in this deal, or in any other; so if I can only get back to New York I think the bargain won’t be such a bad one after all.”

“I’m thoroughly satisfied,” said Evart, “if I can only get home. I know my father and mother probably think I’m drowned, and if the other boys ever lived to get home, and I did n’t come with them, why, that will make them feel all the worse. The most I care about now is once more to set foot in Jersey, and I don’t care much how I get there.”

They were surprised, as they walked up the street a little later, to meet the sailor who so plainly had shown his dislike for Ethan on board the

schooner ; but he had put their suspicions to rest by his friendly intercourse and pleasant words, and he now hailed them in such a way that Evart blamed himself for ever having been suspicious of him.

“Come on with us,” said he to Ethan. “I hear you aren’t going back with us, and we’ll have a farewell glass together. I’m sorry you aren’t going back to England with us.”

“No,” said Ethan ; “we’ve shipped for New York and are going to sail to-morrow.”

“What time?” said the sailor carelessly.

“Five o’clock to-morrow afternoon,” replied Ethan promptly. “We shall be right plumb on time, too ; we don’t want to get left this trip.”

“No, of course you don’t,” said their companion. “I should n’t either, if I’d been away from home as long as you have.”

In this way their conversation ran on, and he had taken them into a place with which he was evidently familiar, and placed before them some rum, of which Ethan began to drink very heavily. Evart tried hard to restrain his friend, but found that he had no influence with him in this line.

“New England rum’s good enough,” said Ethan, “though I can’t afford to drink very much of it, but Jamaky is much better, and when a friend stands treat, why, I’m not the man to go back on that friend.”

Evart thought the sailor’s face took on a scowl at

Ethan's words, but he still plied Ethan with more rum, and soon had him doing the thing above all others which Evart did not want him to do, and that was giving the history of his life. "London Trading," "Whale-boat Warfare," privateering, all he had done, and all he hoped to do, soon came out in his maudlin conversation, and Evart somehow felt certain that the sailor was drawing him out with some purpose, which he then could not understand.

"I'll tell you what," said the sailor at last, "if you're going back to the Colonies, you ought to take some things along with you. You could just as well make a few shillings as not, and I don't believe you're going to get very rich during your passage without doing a little side work for yourself."

"That's just what we're not," said Ethan in a thick voice. "It's just a-givin' of our time."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do," said the sailor. "There's a nigger out here what's got a lot of things that I can sell in the old country, and he's going to let me take them and send him the money when I get through. Maybe he'll do that with you."

Ethan's eyes gleamed. The sailor had appealed to the one motive which was the strongest in his life, for cupidity was stronger even than his liking for rum, and in response to his eager expressions the sailor had promised on the following morning to

take him out to see the same old negro who was making such wondrous terms with him.

Evart did not want to go. He was suspicious of the sailor and thoroughly satisfied that no good could come of their enterprise; but he would not leave his companion, at least he would not then. He did not know but after all there might be something in the sailor's words, and that he himself was more suspicious than he had any right to be.

"Do you think we'd ought to go out here?" said he on the following morning, as they started to the place where they were to meet the sailor. "You know we ought to be aboard by noon, and they slip their anchor at five o'clock. I don't want to run any risks, or take any chances at all; I'm a good deal more anxious to get to New York than I am to make all the money I can here."

"That's all right, sonny," replied Ethan; "we'll get back to New York and make some money, too."

Evart saw that Ethan was determined to follow up the suggestion of the sailor, and that his cupidity had been thoroughly aroused. He himself became more suspicious of the grand terms which the sailor had set forth, as he thought over the matter. The idea that a man, even an ignorant negro, would entrust valuable articles to an entire stranger, and then wait for his pay until after the sale had been made, seemed to him beyond the bounds of common sense.

But no words of his, he soon saw, would restrain his friend now, and several times they stopped in their walk, and their sailor companion insisted upon treating Ethan again and again to Jamaica rum, as they went forth to meet the wonderful negro of whom he had told them.

Evart was not quite certain in his own mind whether Ethan drank the rum chiefly because of his desire for it, or because he thought he was getting it so cheap that it would be the part of economy and a sharp bargain to take all of it that was possible for him at that time.

At the last place in which they stopped they met the negro of whom the sailor had spoken, and at once entered into conversation with him. Evart was surprised at his intelligence. He spoke English, not in the ordinary negro dialect, but better than either of his white companions; but Evart was not at all pleased with him, and he became more and more suspicious of his intentions.

He would not disclose what the articles of great value were. He said he had them concealed in a little house on the plantation which he worked, and that if Ethan cared to see them, he would show them to him there. He did not seem at all anxious to enter into negotiations, and his indifference, whether real or apparent, only served to make Ethan the more eager.

Most of the talking was done by Ethan as the

little party of three followed the black man, who at once led the way out of the town, and in the course of an hour came to a plantation, which they entered.

The buildings and grounds were all so different from anything which Evart had seen before, that he would have been greatly interested in the sight if his heart had not been filled with such forebodings. He was distrustful of both the men who were with them, and was in constant fear that something might occur which would prevent them from being on board at the appointed time, and above everything else Evart was desirous of returning to New York at once.

The little party at length came to a house built of logs, at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the road.

“In here I keep them,” said the black man abruptly. “They’re safe here, and as nobody ever thinks of coming here, so nobody’ll be likely to steal them;” and taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked and opened the door, and stepped back for Ethan to enter.

Ethan’s eyes were bright now, rum and avarice being good companions, and both had left their mark upon him. He had hardly stepped inside the building, and Evart, who was close behind him, had stopped a moment upon the threshold, when the black man suddenly gave Evart a severe push and sent him against Ethan, who fell upon the floor.

He started up angrily, but before he could reply the door had been shut to, and he heard the key turned in the lock.

"Trapped!" said Ethan. "Trapped!"

Evart was exceedingly angry and thoroughly frightened. There they were, shut within the strong walls of this log house, at least a quarter of a mile from any human habitation, without any likelihood of help coming to them, and no one but their captors knowing where they were.

There was no use in calling, although they shouted again and again. They tried to break down the door, but soon found that their efforts were of no avail. They were prisoners, safely confined in a place from which there was no immediate prospect of an escape.

It was in Evart's heart to say some very sharp words to his companion, but in the dim light he could see that Ethan was sobered, and the rueful expression upon his face kept him from saying anything that would add to his sorrow. There was nothing for them to do but to wait, and the long hours passed on in silence.

"I think I could kill that fellow," said Ethan.

"Not before you get out of here though," said Evart.

"No; nor after it either, if I ever am lucky enough to get out. He's got too many friends on shipboard."

“What do you suppose they mean to do with us?” said Evart.

“I have n’t any more idea than you have,” replied his companion. “Here we are shut in, nobody knows where, nor for how long, nor why we’re here;” and they both relapsed once more into silence.

They had had nothing to eat or drink, and when they knew by the darkness, which came at last, that the sun must be getting low, Evart was thinking of how their boat must have started for New York.

His feelings were bitter against his companion, and his own discomfort, intensified by the heat of that day, did not add to his good-humor; but he remained silent and waited. It was almost dark when they heard the sound of the key again in the lock; the door was opened, but they saw at once that it was not by either of the men who had been with them when they had come.

As soon as the door was opened they made a rush and started on the run back toward the shore; but when they came to the dock, their hearts sank within them, and their worst fears were confirmed, for they saw at once that the ship had gone and that they had been left behind.

CHAPTER XXIV.

STRANGE COMPANIONS.

JOHN and Joseph slowly approached the door, each one of them more afraid than he was willing to acknowledge to his companion, and yet knowing that the house might present the least of the evils which threatened them. Perhaps it was because he was more than half-afraid when he rapped on the door that John's summons at first were not heard.

Joseph had started back into the darkness almost unconsciously, but the lack of response which John met brought him once more to his side. John waited for a moment until there was comparative silence in the house and then rapped again much more loudly than before.

This time he knew from the movements within that he had been heard, and in a short time the door was opened and two men stood before him who looked out into the night somewhat startled, as they evidently were not expecting visitors.

"Can you give us a place to sleep in to-night?" said John. "We've lost our way and been caught in the storm. We'll pay you well."

The man who held the candle in his hand hesi-

tated a moment and then said: "The house is full now; I don't see very well how I can take in any more."

"Oh, well, you can let them in out of the rain any way!" said the man by his side. "They're only boys, and they're wet through, too. They look forlorn enough. Have you had anything to eat to-day, my lads?" he added in a kindly tone.

"No," replied both of the boys together, "we've had scarcely anything since morning."

"Well, come in, come in," said the man. "Come in and get warm, any way, and we'll give you something to eat, and then we'll see what can be done."

The boys entered the room and were surprised to see a company of eight men there. They were smoking and they evidently had been engaged in a very earnest conversation, for their faces were still flushed, and they looked more or less suspiciously at the new-comers.

"I can't give you anything but some hasty puddin', boys," said the man who returned with the candle in his hand, and who was evidently their host.

"Well, we'll be glad enough to get that," said John.

"That's what we will," said Joseph, as their host turned to carry out his word.

"Where you been, boys?" said one of the men.

"Oh, we've been quite a piece up in the country," said John. "We did n't know which road to

take away back here where they divided, and I guess we've got the wrong one."

"That depends somewhat on where ye're going," said one of the men with a laugh.

"Where you bound for, any way?" asked another of the men.

"We want to get back to New Jersey just as soon as we can," replied John.

"New Jersey?" said one of the men; "you're a good ways from home. Whereabouts in New Jersey is it ye live?"

"Elizabeth Town," replied John.

"Ho!" said the man, "do you happen to know any one there by the name of Hampton — Jonathan Hampton?"

John looked at Joseph and laughed as he said: "Well, I should say I do. He's a good friend of my father's."

"That's good," said the other. "I thought there's no Tory about you. Any young chap whose father is a friend of Jonathan Hampton is all right here, for I happen to know that Jonathan is n't very much of a Tory."

"That he is n't," said Joseph; "neither is John's father, nor mine either. I guess we should n't have been off on this business we've just been a-doing if we'd had much Tory blood in us, either." But as soon as he had said these words his face flushed as John's eye fell upon him, and he muttered to

himself: "There it is again. I'm always talking too much; perhaps I've got us into another scrape."

His words had served to arouse the curiosity of the men, and they insisted upon knowing what the "business" was to which Joseph had referred.

John, to whom Joseph looked for a reply, hesitated a moment and then, recalling the expressions which had been made by the men about Jonathan Hampton and the Tories, at once decided that they must be strong friends of the Colonies, and he was inclined to think that the meeting together of so many men in such an out-of-the-way place might not be without its bearing upon the war itself. Besides, he knew that the powder was safe now, inasmuch as it was under the protection of Captain Dowdle's Pennsylvania riflemen, and so he told the most of the story to the men who were present. They were interested at once, and the boys saw by their attention that they were greatly pleased at what they heard.

Joseph quickly recovered his spirits and joined in the conversation, and when he saw how pleased the company was, he went back and recounted the beginnings of this story, and told of the Tory school-master and his trouble with the boys.

"That's all right, boys," said one of the men. "I'm glad to find you all straight. You're just among your old friends. Why, one of these men

here took part in the ' Boston Massacre ' that happened more 'n five years ago."

" Oh, yes ; I was in that," said one of the men ; " but this man here," he added as he laid his hand on the shoulder of the previous speaker, " took a hand in New York before that, when the people beat the soldiers."

" Yes," said the first speaker ; " and that man over there," and he pointed toward a man who was sitting quietly in a corner, " was one of those whom Governor Tryon of North Carolina tried to punish in 1771, after he beat the regulars. He was a savage man, was Governor Tryon, and he drove a good many of the leaders across the mountains ; but then they'll do good work there ; they'll make good settlers, I guess."

" Yes." said the second speaker ; " and that man you see over there, some of the Britishers would like to get hold of. They think he might know something about how the Gaspee happened to get afire."

" What was the Gaspee ? " asked John.

" Why, that was the name of one of the king's vessels. They tried to collect the duties from all the boats that came into Providence, you know, and the Rhode Island people were n't very enthusiastic over those taxes, and somehow the Gaspee, which was very busy in gathering them, got on fire one time ; and when the fire got through, there was n't

much of the Gaspee left. They thought they knew who did it, but the Rhode Island people have a notion of their own, and the officers did n't dare to do anything much. They'd have had war there in short order if they had. It's broke out now around Boston; but it would have started three years ago in Rhode Island if the British had tried to do anything then with my friend here and a few others."

John looked with renewed interest upon the company. Evidently these men were met for a purpose, but what the purpose was they did not explain to him, and although the most of them seemed to be young men, he did not dare to ask many questions; though in reply to their questions he gave a detailed account of their own expedition, and how they had left it when it had joined Captain Dowdle's company.

"Dowdle's a good fellow," said one of the men. "I know him well. There won't anybody touch that powder while he has it in charge, before it gets into Washington's hands."

When they told of the loss of their horses, the men questioned them as to whether they would go back and attempt to regain them; but John said: "I don't like to leave them there at all, but what can two boys do? Those men have their friends all around, and there seem to be plenty of Tories in this part of the country, and we might only make a bad matter worse. We must go on, for we want to

get home, and if you can let us sleep here on the floor to-night, why, we'll start early in the morning and pay you well for our lodging."

All the men laughed in reply, and their host said: "We're good friends of the Colonies here. Ye need n't have any fear nor any trouble at all. Three of these men are going down to New York early to-morrow morning by boat, and I rather think they might make a place for you on board if you would like to have it."

"That's what we will," said one of the men, "and be glad of your company, too."

"Why, are we near the river?" said John in surprise. "I did n't know we had come near the Hudson yet."

"Oh, somewhat near; about half a mile from it," said their host.

"Then we were not so much out of our way after all," said John.

It was late in the night before they stopped talking, and long after that before all were asleep. The boys stretched themselves on the floor and slept as only tired boys know how to do. Their long tramp on the previous day had thoroughly wearied them, and as a consequence they were the last ones awake on the following morning, and then they had to be roused by their host, who shook them by their shoulders and called aloud in their ears.

It was not yet light when they had eaten their

breakfast and the little party broke up. Three of the men, as has been said, were to go to New York by boat, while two were to remain at the house, and all of the rest started off in another direction.

“We’ll keep an eye out for your horses,” said one of them, as they bade the boys good-by, when they started up the road by which John and Joseph had come on the preceding evening. But in company now with the three who were going towards the river, the boys started, after having bidden good-by and expressed their thanks to their host, and it was but a few moments before they were on the shore in a little cove somewhat hidden from the view of any one who might be passing on the river. They found the little sloop, which to the boys seemed a marvel of speed and beauty, and on which they started for New York.

“How far are we from the city?” said Joseph.

“Oh, about thirty-five miles or so,” replied one of the men. “We won’t take a very long time in getting there, if we have any decent wind.”

“You’ve got a boat here that can sail it in about as good time as any one I ever saw, or I’m no judge,” said Joseph as he looked over the little sloop with a critical eye, and passed judgment upon her sailing qualities.

“We have to have a boat that can sail,” said one of the men. “We’ve important business on hand, and sometimes we want to get to New York in a

hurry. Then, too, we're in a great hurry to get out of there sometimes," he added with a laugh.

"What is your business?" said Joseph. But the man to whom he spoke only frowned and said: "You've heard what small boys must do when they're in the presence of their elders, haven't you?"

"Yes; but you're not more than ten years older than I am," said Joseph unabashed.

"That may all be so," said the other, "but we can't tell you what we're going down for. Not that we're afraid to trust you," he added hastily, as he saw Joseph's face color slightly, "but because it's something we shall hardly mention, even to ourselves, from now on till it's done. Sometimes walls have ears, and even the water might reflect the sound."

"Well, I don't want to know what your business is, if you don't want to tell it," said Joseph; "but you seemed so willing to ask us all about ours, that I thought I'd only return the compliment."

The other men laughed, and the speaker said: "It does look so, doesn't it? But you know last night you were strangers to us, and before we took you in, you had to give an account of yourselves. That was only fair."

"Yes; I remember somewhere," said John, "what the Bible says about taking strangers in, and who they may turn out to be."

But the air was too bracing and the sights along the riverside too full of interest to the boys to make them harbor any feeling of ill-humor, and they were too grateful to their companions for the shelter of the previous night, and for being carried to New York, in the predicament in which they found themselves after the loss of their horses, to find any fault with them ; and then there was inspiration in the thought that they were going home, after the longest absence either of them had ever known, and the interest which the story of their adventures would arouse in their families and friends was often in their thoughts.

“ You don’t suppose Evart’s come back since we’ve been gone, do you ? ” said Joseph in a low voice to John.

John shook his head and was sober in a moment. “ I ’m afraid we never shall see him again. Do you know, I was just thinking of him, too.”

“ Poor Evart ! Well, I ’m glad we ’re homeward bound, and I only wish he was, too,” said Joseph, as he turned to see what he could do to be of assistance on board the boat.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SCHOOLMASTER MYSTIFIES THE BOYS.

WITHOUT any events of special interest occurring during the voyage, the little party sailed on, and the same day they arrived at the city. Here the boys were fortunate enough to find a party just about to sail for Elizabeth Town. They easily made arrangements by which they were to be carried home, and late that night they arrived at the lower end of the town. As they walked up the long street that led from the dock, few people were to be seen, and the light of a candle here and there showed them how late it was. They separated at the corner of the street, and each started at once for his own home.

When John arrived at his father's house, not a light was to be seen, and as he opened the gate he was saluted by a growl from his dog that came around from the garden to see who was the disturber at that time of night; but a word from the boy not only quieted the dog, but brought him whining and fawning to his feet.

It was some time before John succeeded in awakening his father, and when at last, by dint of his loud raps on the door, his father came downstairs with

a candle in his hands. He was greatly surprised at John's return, and at first thought that something must have gone wrong with the expedition; but the assurance which his boy gave him of its success soon put his heart at rest, and by the time that his mother had appeared and prepared something for him to eat, the most of the story had been told.

They were deeply interested in the account which John gave them, and Mr. Shotwell was certain that the little store of powder would be carried safely now to the headquarters of the army, for Captain Dowdle and his staunch company of Pennsylvania riflemen were known to him by reputation.

"I think you have shown very good judgment for so young a man," said his father. "I feel very much pleased with the expedition, and with your share in it."

This was the highest praise John had ever known his father to bestow upon him, and when he went upstairs to his own room, it was with a heart that was unusually light. Pleased at the praise of his father, and glad to be at home once more, and not a little proud of his share in the events through which he had successfully passed, which even the loss of his horse could not greatly mar, he was soon soundly asleep, and on the morrow was thoroughly rested.

"John, be sure that you don't tell any one where you have been, and what you went for," said his father as John was about to leave the house. "I

don't want any one around here to know that the powder has been sent away. We feel very much afraid, at least some of us do, that it might make trouble for us at home. The people here would n't like to feel that they had nothing to fight with, if worst came to worst."

"Well, what made you send it away then?" said John, "if that's the way the people feel, and there surely is danger here. It does n't seem right to send it all away."

"We're going to have some more very soon," said his father quietly, "and it was simply a question of where it would be the most useful. We are receiving great reports from Cambridge, and I know they have need of all the help they can get."

"Do you hear anything about the British?" asked John.

"I saw in the paper the other day," replied his father, "that General Gage's army was divided into three companies: the first was under the ground, the second was above it, and the third was in the hospital, and it was said that the general had received express orders for the second and third companies to march after the first."

John laughed and said: "I don't suppose they'll do it right away, though that's the reason very likely why we sent on the powder, so as to help them on."

"The Continentals are showing good spirit," said

his father. "I have heard that General Putnam had all the forces under his command come together on Prospect Hill and the declaration of the Continental Congress, which set forth the causes and necessity of taking up arms, was read in the presence of them all. Then the general had the Reverend Mr. Leonard, his chaplain, make a prayer, and at a signal the whole army at its close made their Amen consist of three cheers. Then there was a cannon fired from the fort, and the standard which General Putnam had lately received was flourished in the sight of all."

"The standard?" said John. "What standard?"

"Why, it was one which had been sent to the general, and had on one side the words, 'An Appeal to Heaven,' and on the other, 'Qui Transtulit Sustinet.'"

"Some one said that the British over on Bunker's Hill were the Philistines, and that the Yankees were the Israelites. I suppose that Washington would be the Samson, would n't he?" said John.

"I hope he'll be more like David," said his father. "We've had some fast days while you have been away. There were large congregations in all the churches in New York, I am told, and Congress has observed the day also."

"Well, I don't know that I'm sorry I was away then," said John; but as he saw his father frown at his words, he said no more.

A rumor spread in a little while that General

Gage had surrendered the command of the army to General Howe, and that he had become only a civil governor now, and that his own army was as bitter against him as the Boston people were ; and another report also came from Cambridge that Captain Dowdle had arrived at Cambridge about one o'clock one day, and that on the very day on which he arrived he made a proposition to General Washington to attack the British transports that were stationed in the Charles River.

The general declined his offer, but used him and his men a few nights later. The regulars had been cutting trees and throwing up a line on Charlestown Neck. Captain Dowdle's men were ordered to cut them off, so the captain took thirty-nine of his own men and filed off to the right of Bunker's Hill, and by creeping on their hands and knees, got into their rear without being seen. Lieutenant Miller led another division of forty men, and he got around behind the sentinels on the left, and was within a few yards of joining the other division, when a party of regulars, coming down the hill to relieve the guard, crossed our men as they were lying on the ground. The regulars were surprised, but as soon as they saw our soldiers they fired. Captain Dowdle's men returned the salute, and killed several of the British, and brought off some prisoners. This was a sample of the engagements that were said to be occurring on almost every night.

About this time another company of Pennsylvania riflemen passed through Elizabeth Town on their way to Cambridge.

The boys were greatly interested in the appearance they presented, for there were about one hundred and thirty of them, all active and young, and some of them had scars on their bodies which showed the results of previous engagements with the Indians. One of the men showed the boys four wounds which he had received, where bullets had passed through his body.

Great stories were told of their prowess, and the boys were eager listeners to all that was told of them. One story was that there were two brothers in the company who took a piece of board, five inches broad and seven inches long, and tacked on it a little piece of white paper about as large as a dollar, and then one of the brothers held the board up between his knees, and the other, pacing off sixty yards, and without any kind of rest, shot eight bullets through the paper and never touched his brother. It was said that another one of the company held in his hand a barrel stave with one edge placed close to his side, while one of his fellow soldiers, sixty yards away, sent several bullets through it, and no one seemed to be afraid of the bullet touching him.

The people who saw this were amazed, and were more than surprised when they were told that there

were fifty men in the same company who could do as well as this, and that there was not one who could not "ply," as they termed it, nineteen bullets out of twenty within an inch of the head of a ten-penny nail.

The soldiers seemed to take delight in the surprise which they had aroused, and were evidently proud of the admiration of their skill, which was expressed on every side. They wanted to put some apples on their heads and then have some of their own men, at a distance of about sixty yards, shoot them off; but this was too much for the good people of the town, and they said they would not be witnesses to such foolhardy acts.

At night a fire was kindled around a pole and the company, all naked to the waist and painted like Indians, showed the great crowd of people which had gathered what an Indian war-dance was like. Captain Cresap, who was in charge of the company, was wonderfully agile, and drew forth the praises of every one by his quickness and strength; and when they resumed their march for Cambridge the boys, at least, thought that the British soldiers could not stand long against such men as they had seen; but they little knew the wonderful resources and the power that Great Britain could use if she chose.

But the days passed on, and the boys found that with all the excitement the time often hung heavily on their hands. Like their elders, they lived in

constant expectation of something happening, and in the fever of this excitement anything like steady work seemed out of the question.

One day the boys had gone down the bay to test the report which had come that the weak-fish were biting well, and after spending a few hours there had satisfied themselves that the report had told only a part of the truth, for they soon covered the bottom of their boat with beauties and had started for home again. It was late in the afternoon, and the land breeze had given place to one from the sea, and the boys were rejoicing in the change which had come from the sweltering heat of the afternoon.

John was rowing, and leisurely was sending the little skiff ahead, and as they had been quietly coming up the bay, he had turned his head to see what there was before him. He stopped for a moment as he noticed a little skiff put out from the shore of Staten Island. He watched it as it was sent ahead by the strong and steady strokes of the oarsman, and then picked up his own oars once more and resumed his work. He had taken but a few strokes, however, before Joseph suddenly interrupted him with the exclamation : " John, look at that skiff! Who is that in there? "

John at once turned to look, and after carefully observing the oarsman in the other boat, he turned towards Joseph and looked at him with a puzzled

expression. Without waiting for him to say anything, Joseph quickly said in a low tone: "John, that's Schoolmaster Chase. It is, as sure as you're born."

John only nodded his head by way of reply, and Joseph said: "Do you suppose he can see us?"

"No," said John, "I don't think he can; he does n't act as if he has seen us yet, any way. He was always a little short-sighted, anyhow, don't you remember, and he never could see anything unless it commenced with Tory."

"What do you suppose he's up to now?" said Joseph.

"I don't know," replied John. "I'm going to wait a moment and see if I can find out what his work means."

And acting upon his own suggestion he at once began to send the little boat slowly in the opposite direction. They both eagerly watched the schoolmaster, whom they would not have recognized at the distance from him which they soon were, and they both were surprised when they saw him, as he drew near the Jersey shore, stop rowing and rise in his boat to look carefully all along the shore.

"He's waiting for something, or for somebody," said Joseph. "What do you suppose he's up to?"

"I don't know," replied John. "Perhaps we'll find out if we don't talk too much and have a little patience."

“Look there! see that!” said Joseph in a low tone quickly. “See that white flag over there; somebody’s waving it right over there by the meadows.” And quickly heeding his companion’s words, John looked in the direction in which he pointed, and could see clearly, at a little distance from the shore, a white flag which some one evidently was waving.

“That’s a signal of some kind,” said John. “Here’s something interesting, and I’m interested enough to find out what it is if I can.”

As soon as the schoolmaster caught sight of the waving flag, he at once began to row rapidly, and soon was out of sight on the New Jersey side. The boys waited for a little while where they were, and but few moments had passed before the schoolmaster again appeared, and began to row rapidly toward Staten Island and was soon lost to sight.

“Let’s go up and see what there is there,” said John.

“All right,” replied Joseph; “this is almost as much fun as watching those fellows when they were trying to set fire to our powder. There’s some mischief here, and I’m for finding out what it is.”

John took up his oars and began to row for the point on the Jersey shore where the schoolmaster had disappeared, resolved to unravel the mystery, if it lay within his power.



"LOOK THERE! SEE THAT!" SAID JOSEPH.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JOHN RESOLVES TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

IT was almost dusk when the boys rowed in nearer the shore, and carefully observing the bank, they looked for the place where the schoolmaster had disappeared. The sun was now low, and as they went on Joseph glanced at his companion somewhat nervously, questioning by a look whether it would be wise for them in the approaching darkness to go on with their investigations or not; but the determined look which John had upon his face somewhat reassured him.

In silence they kept on with their search, and soon came to a marshy little inlet, which when the tide was in, as it then was, was full of water.

"This must be about the place," said John in a low whisper. "Shall we follow it up a little way?"

As Joseph nodded his head in reply, for he was determined not to show any fear if his companion did not, they began to row up the little crooked stream into which the tide was rapidly making.

For five minutes they went on in silence, looking carefully on each side of them as they went, without any signs of anything unusual appearing. Suddenly Joseph uttered a low exclamation, and

pointing ahead of them, called his companion's attention to a little cape not far distant, around which the little stream in its winding course passed. On this cape there was a small house, but it was so constructed as nearly to be concealed from the view of any one who might be passing.

The reeds which covered the marsh had been placed on all sides of it, and even its roof was covered by them. It was only by chance that Joseph had chanced to notice it, as the rays of the setting sun fell upon it.

"That shanty has something to do with the schoolmaster's visit, I'll warrant," said John, "but if it had n't been for your sharp eyes, Joe, we should have gone right by it without noticing it."

"Are you going in?" said Joseph.

"Yes, I think we had better try it," replied John, "although I don't think we shall find anybody there. Besides it may not be anything anyway, but as long as we are here, I think we had better find out all we can."

"Yes, that's so," said Joseph in a low voice. "I'm just beginning to be interested. Don't you think we had better call out first before we land?"

"Yes, I do," said John, "for we can pull up around the point if everything isn't all right. You've got good lungs, Joe; you call out, will you?"

Accordingly Joseph shouted: "Hello-the-house! Hello-the-house!"

But no reply came to his call, and he repeated it several times; and then, as still no response was received, they both decided to land, and to see for themselves what the building was. It might be only a fisherman's hut, and except for the suspicious actions of the schoolmaster, they would have passed it by even now without notice.

"Let's look after the oars this time," said Joseph, as he fixed the boat so that it would be ready for a speedy departure in case they found it necessary. Satisfied that everything in the boat was all right, they began to approach the building.

They once more stopped and hailed the hut, but as no answer was received they went up to it and on one side they found a little door.

The hut itself was built of heavy boards and beams, and while small, was very strong. They could find no window, and going back to the door they hammered upon it, at the same time calling upon any one who was within to open it for them, but still no response was made, and the question presented itself as to whether they had better attempt to break it in or not.

"No," said John, "we won't break it in. It's fast, though I can't just see where nor how it's fastened. It seems to be a kind of a sliding door, and we might just as well go back to the boat now,

as to wait any longer here ; we can't get in, and it's going to be dark before long."

Acting upon his suggestion, the boys at once returned to the boat, and took their places as they had had them before, but they were hardly seated before John said in a low voice :—

"There's some one in that shanty."

"What?" said Joseph. "He didn't make any noise if there was any one in there. What makes you think so?"

"Two or three times I thought I heard something," replied John, "and the way that door was fastened makes me think it must have been fixed from the inside. Now I'm just going to drop down below these rushes, and wait a little while and see what comes."

Joseph agreed to the proposition and they soon anchored their boat around the point, where it was out of sight of the hut, and at the same time, by standing up, the boys could look over the tops of the intervening rushes, and without being seen themselves, could watch what was going on at the shanty. The sun had now set, but there was light enough for them to see the entire point clearly, and they stood and watched in silence.

It seemed to Joseph that they had been standing there for a long time, and as nothing had been seen to verify his companion's words, he was about to urge John to take his oars and to row for home

when a low word from his friend caused him once more to look towards the shanty.

John was certain that the door was opening. It was being pushed slowly backward, and in a moment there stepped forth a boy, who stopped for a moment and glanced suspiciously in every direction. Apparently satisfied with the result of this investigation, he once more locked the door, and turned and ran towards the mainland. Joseph shouted to him, but he did not heed the summons. nor did he even stop to look in their direction.

"There must be a path through the swamp there somewhere," said John, "for he could n't wade through that marsh if there was n't; you see they've got two ways of getting at this spot, and if they get caught on one side they can escape by the other."

"Well, what do you suppose it is, anyway?" said Joseph. "What does it all mean?"

"I don't know any more than you do," replied John; "but I'm perfectly satisfied of one thing, and that is that there is some crooked work here. When I find a little shanty built out of solid timber as this is, and covered all over with rushes, so that any one would not be apt to notice it if he happened to be passing, and then I see Schoolmaster Chase row over from Staten Island, and wait here by the shore till he sees the signal which must have come from the shanty, and then row up the creek just about as far as the hut is, and then come back; and when

we go up there we see somebody come out of the shanty and run for the mainland, I tell you there's something wrong."

"Who do you think that little fellow was?"

"It looked like Jimmie Todd."

"The very one I thought of," said Joseph, "though it was so dark that I could n't see very plainly. I wonder what he's doing here."

"He is n't here for the fun of it," replied Joseph; "you can make up your mind to that, first of all."

"I know," said John, "but his father is a Whig. If he were a Tory, I should n't wonder at his having dealings with the Staten Islanders, so I'm greatly puzzled now; but it's time we went home, and we'll leave this puzzle for another day."

Accordingly John took up his oars and began to row for home. The boys were silent most of the time, although occasionally one would break in with the exclamation, "I wonder what it all means!" or, "I wish I knew what the schoolmaster is up to!" But soon they turned into the creek, and by the time that they had rowed up to the stone bridge and made their little skiff fast to the shore it was almost dark. They made a string of the fish they had caught, and then started up the street for home.

As they passed the Red Lion tavern they were surprised to see Jimmie Todd standing on the steps, the very one whom they had thought they had seen at the shanty on the marsh.

He looked at the boys curiously as they passed, though this may have been because the boys both gave him such searching glances, and when they had gone farther up the street Joseph said: "Does n't that beat the Dutch? I would have taken my oath that the boy we saw down there was Jimmie Todd, and here he is up on the Red Lion steps."

"Yes; but he might have taken the short cut home, you must remember," replied John. "It may have been the same boy who was on the steps of the Red Lion and at the shanty, and I think it was, too," he said decidedly.

The boys stopped to divide their fish, and then each went to his own home. That night John gave his father a long account of their experiences during the afternoon, and found him an interested listener.

"We're having a great deal of trouble," said Mr. Shotwell, "with some of our people, who while they pretend to be all friendly enough, can't resist the temptation of furnishing the British with supplies. You see Staten Island is shut out from pretty much everything now; it's filled with Tories, and some of our men are selling supplies to them on the sly, because there's such a big profit in it."

"We felt sure that we knew who the little fellow was at the shanty," said John.

"Who was it?" asked his father.

"Jimmie Todd."

Mr. Shotwell gave a low whistle of surprise when he heard the name, and was silent and thoughtful for a moment.

“ Well, it may be so, it may be so,” he finally said, as he arose to prepare for bed, “ but Mr. Todd’s words are well enough, though I very much suspect that he’s like a good many other men around here, who are good friends of the Colonies now, but who the first time that real trouble comes will swing off and be just as strong friends of the Tories as they were of the Whigs, and the chance to make a good profit now is proving too strong for him. I suspect there are a good many men who are trying the same thing, but perhaps we shall know more about it in a few days, and the best thing we can do just now is to go to bed ;” and bidding his son good-night, he left John to go to his room.

When John climbed into the high four-posted bed which stood in one corner of his room, he drew back the curtains, and before he went to sleep, his mind went over many of the exciting events through which he had passed within the last few weeks. First of all, his thoughts went out toward Evart and the time when he had disappeared in the dense fog of that day now so many weeks ago. Not one word had been heard from him since, and John, like the most of his friends, now had lost almost all hope of ever seeing his young comrade again.

From Evart his thoughts went out to that march

toward Boston which he had not finished, but he knew that General Washington must have the powder before this time, and he was glad of the part which he had been enabled to take. He wondered where his horse was, and whether the man who had taken it had ever been thrown by that trick of shying which he so often had, and then he thought of the puzzling events of the day which was just closing, and of the schoolmaster and his relation to that little house so snugly hidden in the marsh. Evidently there was some understanding which the schoolmaster had with the parties at the hut, but just what it was he could not determine. It was plain that whoever had built the hut wanted it concealed, and it was also clear that whatever dealings were had there, they were not for the public to know.

“I’m going to find out about it,” said John to himself. “That’ll be a good piece of work for me, and Joe’ll be a great help too, and if Evart were only here he’d be worth as much as both of us.”

But John was becoming drowsy now, and as his thoughts began to wander, it seemed to him as if a minute only had passed before he heard the voice of his mother calling him to breakfast.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CLEW.

FOR several days the boys did nothing towards carrying out their plans for solving the mystery of the hut on the marsh. In their conversations about the matter, they decided that it might be better for them to defer all investigations for a few days, and so turn aside suspicion in case Jimmie Todd had really suspected them of being the ones who had summoned him to come forth from the hut on the night of the schoolmaster's visit.

Meanwhile they saw the little fellow several times, and were unusually cordial to him. He had been accustomed to regard them as "big boys," and while at first he seemed to draw back from any friendly moves they made toward him, he soon seemed to lose his fear, and delighted in the notice of those to whom he had been accustomed to look up.

Several times, in a quiet way, the boys in their conversations with him tried to lead him around to talk about the marsh and Schoolmaster Chase and the Tories of Staten Island, but the frightened look which he had upon his face whenever they spoke to him of these things, and the suspicion with which he at once regarded them caused them to

desist, and they decided that but little could be expected from him. He evidently had had his instructions given him, and had learned his part well.

"Did you ever see a little fellow with such a close mouth?" said Joseph to John one day. "Why, I believe he can keep a secret better than I can."

"You don't mean it," said John derisively.

"Yes," said Joseph soberly, not appreciating at all the quiet sarcasm of his friend's words. "Yes, he is very close-mouthed."

"Well, I've decided," said John, "that we can't expect to find out anything from him, but I think that enough time has gone by to put the fear of any one to sleep. We've been trying to make any one who is suspicious of us think that we were not the ones who went to the shanty, or else that we did n't know anything about it."

"Well, what are you going to do?" said Joseph. "Are you going to give it up and let it go?"

"Nay, verily," replied John; "giving up is something I never yet have learned to do, and I don't think I'll begin to study it now."

"Never give up?" queried Joseph; "how about Nassau Hall? I thought you were the lad that was going to college there."

"Well, I did n't give up, did I?" said John. "I was willing to go right on. 'T was that Tory of a schoolmaster that did the giving up."

"Well, what are your plans now?" asked Joseph.

"I have thought of several," replied John. "I wanted to go down there and stay two or three nights on the marsh if necessary, but my mother did n't want me to. She says the chills and fever grow on all the bushes down there."

"To say nothing about your not being able to keep awake," said Joseph.

"Never mind that," said John. "But what do you think of this other plan? You know we've always had the reputation of being great fishermen; suppose we begin again and start out in the afternoon, and arrange our plans so that we come back along about dark every day. That was the time you know when they had their performance before down there, and if there is anything going on it's possible that we may learn something about it."

"My father," said Joseph, "has been talking with Mr. Todd. In fact, he has rather made a point of it to keep watch of him a little in a quiet way, and he says he's more patriotic than ever he was. I think father is half-inclined to think that he's all right, and he thinks that either we were mistaken or else that Mr. Todd is about as deceitful a man as there is in the whole of New Jersey."

"Well, that's just what he is," replied John half-angrily. "He has n't got grit enough to come right out and tell a straightforward lie. He's a mean sneak, and I always despised a sneak, for he's a man that is n't brave enough to tell a bold lie."

He'd do it if he dared to; the trouble is he's too much of a coward to try it."

"Well, all right," said Joseph; "we'll go fishing to-morrow, and then we'll try it 'most every day, and we'll see if something does n't come."

For a week the boys kept up this plan, but nothing new was seen. Once or twice they went up the little inlet near which the house on the marsh had been built and tried the door, but they always found it heavily locked from the inside. They could not break it in, and besides, that was something they did not care to do; but no signs of any man appeared, and the boat for which they were waiting, and which they hoped would come from Staten Island, had not yet been seen.

"My father says," remarked Joseph one day, "that he does n't believe there's anything in it at all. It's nothing but a boy's story, and that even if we did see the schoolmaster, which he does n't more than half-believe, he says that it does n't mean anything, and as far as the house down on the marsh is concerned he says it is only a fish shanty, and it has n't been used for years."

"That may all be so," replied John half-angrily, "but old fish shanties don't have new locks that nobody can break, and I don't believe they have paths out through the marsh made of good boards wherever a board is needed, and new boards at that; for I've tried the path, and I tell you it's one

that's being used now, only we have n't been lucky enough to be on hand at just the time when it was in use."

"Oh, well! we'll try it again to-morrow," said Joseph, "and maybe we'll have better luck, though Friday's an unlucky day."

"Why is it an unlucky day?" said John. "I've always had the best luck I ever had in my life on Friday. Don't you remember when we got home from that trip when we were drifting down the sound, and don't you remember that it was on Friday when we found those friends to help us up on the Hudson?"

"Well, I only hope it will prove so now," said Joseph. "My mother says she's getting tired of the fish we bring home, and all the neighbors absolutely refuse to accept any more, even as a present. They'll begin to think pretty soon we're fishing for more than weak fish."

"Well, we are," said John, "and to-morrow is the day when our bait will be taken."

"Well, I hope so," said Joseph, as he started for home.

Accordingly, acting upon the plans they had formed, the boys started out on the following afternoon as if they were going fishing as usual, and soon rowed down the creek and around the bay; but no success attended their efforts to lure the fish with their bait, and all through the afternoon they caught nothing.

"This is your lucky Friday, is it?" said Joseph. "If this is a sample of it, I don't want to see any more. If this is your good luck, I would n't mind seeing what your poor luck would be."

"Never mind," said John, "the day is n't done yet, though the luck does n't seem to be improving any," he added as a drizzling rain began to fall.

"Yes, and the fog's coming up too," said Joseph.

"I think I've filled my capacity full of fog (capacity was the word Schoolmaster Chase used, was n't it?)," said John. "Oh, well, my capacity for fog is thoroughly satisfied."

"Oh, dear! I never see a fog now without thinking of Evart. Do you remember how he disappeared that day, just vanished into thin air, the way our Virgil says the father of Æneas did when he tried to put his arms around his neck?"

"Was it his father or his wife?" said John.

"I guess it was both of them," replied Joseph, "but do you know I've thought a good deal of Evart in the last week. I wonder if he really is dead?"

"I only wish I could say," said John soberly, "I've been thinking of him a good deal, too. Sometimes when I get into bed he's the last one in my mind; but I'm not going to stay here in this rain and fog. We'd better be putting for home;" and he took up his oars and began to send the little skiff up the bay. He kept near the shore and both

boys were silent, the thought of Evart, about whom they had last been talking, making both of them serious and sober.

Suddenly Joseph in a low tone called upon John to stop rowing.

"Hark!" said he, "can't you hear oars? There's somebody rowing ahead of us."

The fog was too thick for the boys to see anything that might be in front of them, but when John stopped rowing, they both listened intently.

"That's a boat, sure enough," said Joseph, "but it sounds as if it was coming from land."

"Why, we're farther up than I thought we were," said John, "and if the boat's coming out of the inlet in such a fog as this it means business."

"Let's paddle up a little nearer," said Joseph, "and if we get close in to the shore, I don't believe any one can see us, and we can tell if anything comes out of the inlet."

Accordingly John sent the boat a little farther up the shore, and then they both waited and listened. The sound of the rowing had almost ceased, although at times they still could hear it and then again it seemed to stop.

"That's because the inlet is so winding," said John. "It's coming though;" and as if to verify his words, in a little while they saw two boats put out from the inlet and start directly across the water for Staten Island,

The boys were satisfied, from the hurried glimpse they caught, that one of the boats was loaded and one was not; and they were almost certain that there were two men in the boat which was carrying the load, but both boats soon disappeared in the fog, and while the sound of the oars still could be plainly heard, the boat's treasures could not be seen. Before John could restrain him, Joseph set up a shout.

"Come back here! Come back here! Bring that stuff or we'll shoot you. You can't run away from sheriffs in that way. We're after you, and if you don't come right back here, we'll send a bullet after you."

John, angry as he was at what he thought was the rashness of his friend, could not keep from laughing at the effect which Joseph's words at once produced. The sound of the rowing stopped as suddenly as if the oars had been lost. The boys caught the dim sound as of voices, and then the rowing was once more resumed, as if the men in the boat were in desperation. The evident haste of the party to get away from the shores of New Jersey made the boys both laugh.

"Let's chase 'em, John! Let's chase 'em!" and, acting upon his suggestion, John began to row, exerting all his strength; and Joseph began to shout, John at times joining with him. It sounded to the men who were trying to escape as if a half-

dozen men at least must be after them, as the boys varied their tones, shouting now together, and then separately.

They had gone but a little way before they could make out the two boats in advance of them, which now had separated.

“Shall we chase one?” said John.

“Yes; let’s get after it,” said Joseph.

“We’ll have some fun anyway, but if they shoot, they’ll have some fun with us,” said John soberly.

“Well, that boat ahead has only one in it, and he looks like a boy,” said Joseph. “Let’s go for him; perhaps he can tell us all we want;” and setting up a shout again, they soon caught up with the boat and made it fast to their own.

“Jimmie Todd, as I’m alive!” said Joseph.

“Let me go! Let me go!” pleaded Jimmie.

“I’m going to let you go,” said Joseph; “but not just yet.”

John, who had said nothing to the frightened boy, here turned and said: “Jimmie, give me that key in your pocket. Then we’ll see about letting you go.”

Jimmie made no reply, but when John repeated his request, partly crying, he put his hand into his pocket and drew forth a key, which he handed to John.

“Now let me go! Now let me go!” pleaded

the little fellow. "You said you would, if I gave you the key."

"Well, I'm going to let you go," said John, "but not to Staten Island. We're going to take you back safe to Jersey. Come on, then, with us;" and in spite of the tears and pleadings of Jimmie, they began to row toward the shore, keeping his boat fast in tow.

Joseph got in with him and rowed that boat, while John rowed the other. When they approached the shore they found, as they thought, that they were too far down the shore, and they turned and rowed up again; but the inlet could not be found, and again they reversed their course, and a good half-hour had passed before they found the place for which they were seeking.

"Here it is; we've found it now," said John as he led the way, and the little party began to go up the inlet.

When they reached the place where the hut was, as they leaped ashore, Jimmie tried to escape, and at first they were inclined to let him go, but in a moment Joseph ran after him, and soon caught him and brought him back to the hut.

John meanwhile had been trying the key which Jimmie had given him, but without any success.

"You little rascal!" he said when Joseph returned with the struggling boy. "This was n't the key to this lock at all. Where is it?" and as the

boy made no answer, they took him and searched him.

They soon found a key, hanging from his neck by a string, which they knew at once must be that for which they were seeking, and, taking it from him, they started for the door.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

JOHN and Joseph had taken only a few steps, as they started to approach the little hut, when they were startled by hearing Jimmie call out to them. His tones showed how eager he was, and the sound of his voice startled the boys who were open to every new impulse.

“Don’t go there! O John, don’t go near the door, don’t, don’t, I beg of you.”

“Why, what’s the trouble now?” said John, stopping a moment and turning to the boy who was trembling in his eagerness. He, however, only repeated the words he had uttered, pleading more earnestly with the adventurous young Jerseyman not to leave him.

“Never mind, Jimmie,” said John quietly. “Never mind, we’re going to see what there is in there. We’ll be easy with you though, and if you don’t make any trouble now I don’t think that you’ll have any later.”

“But, John,” said the boy who was now in tears, “I’m not begging for myself, honestly I’m not; but I’m afraid to have you go there. It isn’t on my account at all, but on yours.”

It's for your sakes only that I'm begging you not to go."

But the boys were not willing to listen to him, and although they had some difficulty in understanding the motives that had brought the change in Jimmie, they still were unwilling to give up their enterprise now that its solution seemed so near at hand, and, accordingly, they started on and left the younger boy on the bank, not at all afraid that he would make off with their boat.

"What do you suppose makes him talk that way?" said Joseph. "You don't suppose there's any great danger in this thing, do you?"

"I don't know anything about that," replied John; "all I know is that I'm going to find out what that shanty contains;" but they stopped for a moment to look behind them at the boy who followed them with an anxious look, and they listened carefully to learn whether there was anything unusual at the hut, but a deep silence lay upon everything.

They could see the meadows all about them, and the air was heavy with the mist which shut them in. It made everything appear more dismal than usual. They could hear the sound in the inlet which the swift moving tide produced, and the figure of the trembling boy they had left behind them could now be seen dimly. Evidently both of them were somewhat oppressed by the warning which Jimmie had given them, and yet neither was quite willing to

give up the hope of solving the mystery which had occupied their thoughts almost entirely during the past few days. John was the first to speak, and Joseph looked up quickly, as he broke the silence, and said: "Oh, I'm going on! I have n't come as far as this for nothing. Probably there is some danger, but then I'll risk it."

"You're true blue, are n't you, John?" said his friend. "You don't ask me to do anything that you would n't do yourself. My grandfather told me the other day that one time when he was a boy his younger brother was with him out in the clearing, and they found a nest of bumblebees. My grandfather did n't just want to tackle it, so he told his younger brother to break it up. He was afraid and said: 'They'll sting me; I know they'll sting me!' 'Oh, no, they won't,' said my grandfather; 'go ahead! Just break them up, they won't sting you. I'll risk it, I'll risk it.' Do you know the old man laughed as hard when he was telling about it, as if it was happening then? I'most always find that people are perfectly willing to run the risk of other people getting hurt."

John laughed quietly and said: "I'll open the door alone, Joe, if you want me to."

"No, I don't," replied Joseph, "though I confess to feeling a little scary; but go ahead—I'm going with you;" and the boys cautiously began to approach the hut, attentive to every sound, and

looking on every side for any possible approach. John held the key, and in a few moments the eager boys were at the door, but a surprise met them there, and they looked into each other's faces perplexed and somewhat alarmed.

"This lock is n't fastened at all" whispered John. "I rather think the door is locked from the inside."

"What are you going to do?" said Joseph; but before a reply could be made the door of the hut was opened suddenly and a number of men rushed forth. They caught a glimpse of the man who was in advance, and an exclamation of dismay fell from their lips.

"It's the schoolmaster! It's Schoolmaster Chase," said Joseph quickly. "Come on, John, let's get out of this."

The sight of men behind the schoolmaster and the angry expression on their faces and the loud words which they used served to thoroughly frighten the boys, and they turned and ran.

It seemed to them as if multitudes were pursuing them, and the angry face of the schoolmaster, for whom the boys felt much of their former feeling of fear that came largely from their regard for his office, increased their alarm.

But they had separated when they first turned to run, so startled were they, and when John arrived at the bank and jumped into his little skiff and pushed out into the water, he found that he was alone.

The fog was as heavy as ever, and hid almost everything from his sight. Without stopping to think, he seized the oars and began to row with all his might down the stream. His actions had been somewhat hurried by the warning voice of Jimmie, who in a low tone had said: "Hurry out of this, John; don't wait a minute. I don't know what they'd do to you, if they should catch you."

But John had gone only a little way down the stream when the thought of his missing companion brought him to a full stop. Resting upon his oars, he held his boat where it was and blamed himself for the eager haste which had made him go off without his friend, and yet the great haste which both of them had used had increased the confusion in which he had acted.

He quickly decided that he would remain where he was for a few minutes, and then return cautiously and see if he could find out what had become of his companion. Accordingly, as he heard no sounds that indicated pursuit, he took in his oars and pushed the boat along close by the shore, his hands resting on the bank, and when he had gone as he thought far enough to be able to pick up Joseph if he were near by, he gave a peculiar whistle which the members of the Triumvirate had agreed upon; but no reply was given and no sound was heard. Evidently he was not being pursued, and perhaps the school-master and his men had wanted only to frighten them.

"They succeeded pretty well if that was what they wanted," said John to himself, and as the stillness continued he decided that Joseph must either have fallen into their hands or escaped by the path which led to the mainland; and so he concluded that he would at once row for home, and then if he did not find his friend there, he would make up a party for his rescue and return at once.

He rowed down the inlet as quietly as he could, but as the tide was rapidly coming in, he found his progress slow and his work difficult. The fog also served to increase his fear, and expecting every moment that some party would fall upon him, he was more anxious than he could tell, as he rowed on. As he entered the bay his heart almost stood still, as he thought he caught the sound of oars. He ran his skiff up close to the shore again and waited in silence, but the sound was not repeated and once more he resumed his rowing.

He soon found the mouth of the creek, and putting forth all his strength, began to row for home.

Every moment his fear became less as the distance between himself and possible pursuers increased, and yet it was with a feeling of great relief that at last he saw the old stone bridge.

As he came near he heard some one shouting to him, "Then you've come at last, have you? I've been waiting almost an age for you. I did n't know but you'd fallen into the hands of those fellows."

John looked up and saw his friend Joseph peering down at him as he rowed up to the bridge. He was greatly relieved to know that he was home in safety, but he was not demonstrative in his manner, and he quietly said: "How did you get here, Joe?"

"Why, I did n't wait for you," replied Joseph, as he came down and assisted his friend in making his boat fast. "There was n't a great deal of time you see, and when I started off I did n't know just where I was going; but I was lucky enough to strike the path, and I thought I'd be satisfied with that, and if it only led to some place of safety, I did n't care much what it was. I felt a little mean in leaving you, for I did n't know but you were in the hands of those men, and yet I knew if anybody could get away from them you could, and I rather thought you'd started for the boat. I think I made about as good time as ever I did, and so I've been here, it seems to me, something less than a week, waiting for you."

"Well, I've come, you see," said John.

"Yes, I'm aware of that," said Joseph, "but what do you suppose is the matter down there?"

"What do you mean, with us or with those men?"

"Both," replied Joseph, "but I was thinking about the men. What do you suppose they were doing there?"

"Scaring all intruders off," replied John; "but it proves one thing at any rate."

“What’s that?” inquired Joseph.

“Why, it shows that the sight of the school-master we had the other day was n’t for nothing. I thought there was something wrong then, and now I know it.”

“Well, what are you going to do now?” inquired Joseph.

“I’m going home, that’s the first thing I have in mind. Come on with me.” Upon Joseph’s consent, both started for John’s home.

They were fortunate enough to find Mr. Shotwell there, and to him they told all their story. He did not make many comments, and yet he was deeply interested in the story which the boys had to tell.

“Well, what do you propose to do now, John?” said his father. “Have you any plans in mind?”

“Yes, that’s what I have been thinking of all the way up from the creek,” said John.

“Well, we’ll listen to your proposal,” said his father, and so John outlined the plan which he had been thinking of on his way home.

“I think,” said John, “that there’s something in that hut on the meadows that ought not to be there. I think it would be a good thing if we organized two parties to-morrow, and have one of them come up the creek, and the other go down by the path at the same time. One of the parties could come up and stand guard, and I think they ought to be armed so as to be ready if any danger threatened; the other

party ought to rush up to the door, and if they can unlock it with the key which I've got yet, that will settle it; but if they can't they ought to smash it in."

"That is n't a bad suggestion," said his father at last. "Have you thought about who would be good men to go with you?"

"I have thought of some who would," replied John, and he began at once to talk over the names of those who would be suitable for such an expedition as he had in mind.

A list agreeable to his father was at length made out, and the boys spent that evening in seeing each one. They had not much trouble in getting a dozen boys of their own age and four men to promise to go, Mr. Shotwell insisting upon some men going, as the presence of wiser and cooler heads might save the boys from some danger.

At last the two parties were completed, and they had agreed to meet at the stone bridge at half-past four o'clock on the following morning. Meanwhile they were not to mention to any one the object of the proposed expedition, and each had promised to be on hand without fail at the appointed time.

It was arranged that Joseph should spend the night with his friend. The boys were so highly excited that there was not very much sleep for them that night, and they were so afraid that they would not be on time at the appointed place, that one

of them arose about every half-hour during the night to see if the time had come.

But at the hour which had been agreed upon, every one who had promised to go was at the stone bridge. Then a few minutes were taken for a consultation, and it was decided that John and Joseph should lead the party that was to approach by land. They were not to come too near the hut, and yet they were to stand as guards and some of them were to be armed. They also were to await the coming of the other party which was to hail the hut when they arrived, and then if no response was made to their summons, they were to rush in and break down the door if necessary. For this purpose they carried some heavy sledges, and some of them were armed as well. Considerable excitement was manifested by them all, but at last all things were ready and both parties started.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PROBLEM BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT.

THE party which was led by John and Joseph was the first to arrive at the hut. They had approached in single file by the narrow little path which Joseph had taken when he had escaped on the previous day. As they came near, not a sound was heard save that of their own footsteps, and not a human being appeared in sight. While some of them were armed it was agreed that the guns should not be used by any one, except in case of an attack by the men who were supposed to be within the building.

The very stillness was oppressive. They could see the gulls in their low swift flight above the waters of the bay, and the mosquitoes gathered in clouds as the men took the positions which they were to hold until the other party approached.

Joseph whispered to John: "Do you see how different the shanty is to-day from what it was yesterday?"

"Yes," replied John, "but I can't just make out what the difference is."

"Why, the rushes are all gone," said Joseph. "They've taken them off from the roof and away

from the sides. I wonder what it means ; ” but their attention was soon called to the sound of approaching boats, and they eagerly watched to see whether the sound was made by friends or foes.

But their hearts were soon at rest as they saw that it was the other party coming near. The men all landed rapidly and quietly, and as soon as they saw that their oars were placed where they could be used quickly, if occasion required, they stepped ashore and in silence began to walk towards them.

The boys were both highly excited now, and Joseph could not keep from whispering to John, “ This beats the expedition to Boston all to pieces. I hope they ’ll catch some of the men in there ; ” but a warning look from John made him silent at once, and they both watched the men who were now almost up to the hut.

One of the party stepped in front of the others and called out : “ Come out of that shanty. We want to see you ; ” but no answer was given, nor had any sign as yet appeared that any one was inside.

A second hail produced no other effect, and then the leader shouted : “ Come out of that shanty. We have a dozen men out here and we ’re armed ; ” but only a silence greeted this call, as it had done the others.

“ If any man steps out of that shanty armed,” called out the leader once more, “ he may be shot. We call upon you to lay down your arms and come

out here." Still no answer was given nor had any sign yet appeared that any one had heard this strange summons to come forth.

A brief and whispered consultation was held by the besiegers, and then the leader, taking a heavy sledge, stepped to the door. A startled expression made by him quickly called the attention of every one behind him to his further actions.

"Why, the door is n't locked at all," he said. "I can step right inside;" and pushing slightly against the door he threw it open, and all the party approached.

It was evident that there was no one inside; indeed, it did not appear as if any one had been there very recently. A few dead fish were upon the floor, and the smell which greeted them when they stood in the doorway was one that might have come from a house which had been shut up for a long time. A few old and ill-smelling garments hung upon the walls, and a fisherman's hat or two lay upon the table which stood at one side of the room. There were also a few nets hanging upon the walls, and the whole appearance was that of a shanty which had been used by the fishermen, and not very recently at that.

The boys were astonished at the sight, and a good deal chagrined as some of the men who were with them, disappointed at the turn which affairs had taken, and at the sharp reaction from their high excitement, began to make light of the whole matter.

"Well, that's a great story you got up," said one of them in an angry tone. "Two young fellows like you getting us off from our work, and down here on an errand like this, ought to be treated to a dose of tar and feathers."

"I've no patience at all," said another one. "The youngsters were frightened at their own shadows."

"There was somebody here yesterday, anyway," said Joseph, stung at the ridicule and trying to make a feeble resistance as he saw that John still remained silent.

"Well, we won't waste any more time here. Let's get along home," one of the men said, and immediately the entire party started to return as they had come.

John and Joseph walked along together, and in low tones conversed about the exciting events of the morning and at the ridiculous turn which affairs had taken.

"Do you suppose that we could have been fooled yesterday?" said Joseph.

"Fooled?" said John angrily. "No! If you want to be such a fool as to think you were fooled, then you can. I, for my part, know there is something wrong about that shanty, and I'm perfectly satisfied that the schoolmaster and his friends have done this thing just to throw us off the track."

"Well, no one believes it," said Joseph, "and we

shall soon be the laughing-stock of the whole of Elizabeth Town."

"I can't help it," said John. "'He laughs best who laughs last.' I tell you there's something wrong here, and I'm more convinced of it now than ever."

The boys had dropped behind the others during their conversation, and when they came to the bridge they found that all who had taken part in the expedition were there waiting for them.

A derisive laugh greeted them as they approached, and Joseph was inclined to run past them; but John in a low voice said to him: "Hold on, Joe; let's face it out. We have got to meet it, and the sooner we do it the better."

"Say, Joe," called out one of the men, "do you know what kind of a shop that was down there?"

"That's what I have been trying to find out," said Joseph in reply.

"Well, I know what it is now," said the man; "It's a shop where they manufacture wild geese." A shout of laughter greeted this sally, and the boys had nothing to say.

"I'll tell you what it is," said another of the men; "we ought to use some of the feathers from that factory; I think some one else would furnish us some tar, wouldn't they?"

"Oh, hold on!" said another. "Don't you see the boys are all cut up about it? They're not to

blame; they thought there was something wrong there, anyway."

"I don't blame you," said John, "for feeling a good deal cut up about this expedition this morning, but you don't feel half so much so as we do; and yet I feel perfectly certain that there's something wrong there. We couldn't have been fooled entirely, and I don't think we were fooled, either; but I'm sorry you've had all the trouble you did, and sorry we were the cause of it; but I'm going to keep right on searching, and I know we shall find something before we are done."

"That's all right, boys," said one of the men good-naturedly. "We know you didn't mean to take us on a wild-goose chase, and boys and men are liable to make mistakes. I've even been known to make little ones myself."

In better humor the crowd soon dispersed, and the boys disappeared, each to go to his own home. When John entered his father's house and began to relate to him the story of the disastrous expedition of the morning, there was strong suspicion of tears on his face, and his voice several times was almost broken, but he was wonderfully comforted when he had finished his story, to have his father say: "I'm thoroughly satisfied, John, that there was and is something wrong there. This is only a trick which has been put up, and it is a very thin one at that. The very fact that they've taken off the rushes from

the roof and have thrown a lot of ill-smelling fish inside the house, and left their nets and fishing gear around so loose, and all without the door being locked — why, everything shows that it was done with a design. You frightened them, and they simply have tried to throw you off the track, that's all; but they'll be at it again very soon I'm sure, and I'm just as sure, also, that you'll catch them, too, John."

John, a good deal cheered at his father's confidence in him, and at his faith in his story, eagerly said: "Do you suppose they'll use that same shanty again?"

"I don't know about that," said Mr. Shotwell; "but I do know that they won't give up this trading for a very long time; there's too much money in it, and I'm afraid that some men, whom we don't suspect just now, are engaged in it. These times are full of temptation for men who are not very strong in their principles. It doesn't cost much to do right when it's the popular thing. Somehow if a man ever does right, it means hard work for him; but if you let a boat drift, it always goes down stream. However, I'm not going to preach you a sermon. I'll leave that for the dominie; but you wait, and keep up your courage, and you'll catch them yet."

"I hope so," said John; "and I'm more determined now that I'll try than ever before. What

you've said has encouraged me more than anything that's happened in a good while."

"You must keep up your courage, John," said his father. "These times are trying to a good many men. I understand that the British have offered a reward of five thousand pounds for the head of General Putnam. They could afford to give a good deal more than that for it. I've met General Putnam a good many times."

"Where?" asked John, his mind called for a moment away from his own troubles to the story which his father was telling him, evidently with the design of leading his son's thoughts from the mortifying experience through which he had just been passing.

"Why, he used to keep a tavern in Brooklyn, Connecticut. I very well remember the sign which he had hung out in front of it. It was made of yellow pine and painted alike on both sides."

"What was painted on it?" said John.

"Why, it was a full length portrait of Wolfe. You know, I've always had a great admiration for his character."

"Yes, I know," said John; "but what's going to be the end of all this rebellion?"

"No one knows," replied his father, "but my opinion is different from that of a good many others about here, for I think it will end in the Colonies separating from England. A good many of those

who are half-willing to take part in this rebellion would drop it in a minute if they thought it meant separation from the old country. You see the richer people are more inclined to be Tories and stand by the king. There are lots of people in New York who are rabid Tories, and if things don't move just right they'll soon show it."

"Are most of the educated men Tories?" asked John.

"A good many of them are. Most of the independent ministers, — that is those who are not of the Church of England — are in favor of the Revolution. Quite a good many of the lawyers are Whigs, but most of the doctors are Tories."

"How about the newspapers?" asked John.

"Most of them are Tory," replied his father. "You see many of the people who own property are afraid to have it disturbed, and so a good many are Tories, not because they believe England is right, but because they are afraid it will bring danger to their property if any change is made or threatened."

"I suppose all of the English people over here are Tories, are n't they?" said John.

"Why, a good many of those who have come over lately are, but the Irish and the Scotch-Irish are for the Colonies. They say that the Revolutionary party is made of one-fourth native born, one-half Irish, and one-quarter English or Scotch."

“Well,” said John, “our people came from England, but I’m not very much in favor of her on account of her manner of dealing with the Colonies.”

“Neither am I,” said his father, “and if I could have my way I should favor separation at once from the old country. Everything points to this country becoming an independent nation, and why so many of the better class of people, at least those that are considered the better class, are either openly or secretly opposed to all idea of a revolution I cannot tell. Still I’m glad that some of them are such true friends. This Colonel Washington, who has been put in command of the Continental forces, is a natural-born aristocrat, but there is n’t a better friend to the cause in all the land than he is.”

“Where did he come from?” said John.

“Virginia,” replied his father. “He was born at Wakefield on the Potomac, and he has lived in the Old Dominion most of his life, though he is not an old man now, only just in the prime of life in fact. But we’ve talked long enough about these things, and I hope you see that I believe that you are in the right of this matter down on the meadows, and that it won’t be very long before you will be prepared to show it.”

“That’s what I said to Joe,” said John eagerly, “that ‘he laughs best who laughs last.’”

“You’ll get the laugh on them yet,” said his father as he turned to leave him; “but never mind,

to-morrow I've something to propose to you that I'm sure will interest you very much."

John looked at his father with a question upon his face, but he said nothing, as he knew it would be useless for him to press the matter further.

He busied himself during the day in the work which his father gave him about the place, half-suspecting that his father had taken this way to give him an excuse for remaining at home, and thus enable him to avoid meeting any of those who had been with him on the morning's expedition, and who might, by their reference to its failure, hurt his feelings about a matter concerning which he felt very sensitive.

That night, when he went to his room, he found sleep was very slow in coming to him, and the last thought in his mind of which he was conscious was about the information which his father was to give him in the morning. He was satisfied from the way in which he had spoken that it was something unusual, and he knew, when he did hear what he had to say, that it would deeply interest him.

CHAPTER XXX.

A REAR GUARD.

THE next morning, after breakfast had been disposed of, and the family prayers had been conducted, a service which usually consumed a long time, as Mr. Shotwell always insisted upon reading a chapter from the Old Testament, a psalm, and a chapter from the New Testament each time, John thought that his father would explain to him the matter to which he had referred on the night before. But he said nothing after prayers, and John became more and more impatient, and yet he soon satisfied himself that his impatience was worse than useless, as it would only serve to irritate his father, and would not bring him the information which he desired one whit the sooner. There was nothing for him to do but to wait.

Joseph came soon after breakfast, and he was as willing as John to remain at his home, not caring to face the ridicule which they feared might be visited upon them in the town because of the disastrous expedition to the meadows.

Mr. Shotwell had gone from home early in the morning, without leaving any word as to where he was going, or what he was to do; but John, who

thoroughly understood his father, had determined that he would not leave home himself, as he knew he might return at any time, and that, if he did, he would expect to find his son there if he wanted him for anything.

The boys talked over their experiences of the previous day, and were more and more convinced that the apparent condition of the hut on the meadows was due to the attempt of the men they were suspecting to throw off all comers from the right track. They thought and talked of more schemes and plans by which they might defeat the schoolmaster in some of the dealings which they were certain he was carrying on with some of the people at Elizabeth Town or along the Jersey shore.

About the middle of the afternoon Mr. Shotwell returned, and when he found Joseph there he called both of the boys into his room. Even when they had taken their seats he remained silent for a little time, and there was nothing for the boys to do except to wait his pleasure. Children and young people, too, were to be seen and not heard then, for even those who had ceased to be children were not regarded by their fathers as persons who ought to be treated with a full measure of confidence. Sons were to honor their fathers, and how could they look up to them unless their fathers held themselves somewhat above them?

At length Mr. Shotwell turned to the boys and said: "I suppose you've forgotten all about that trip you took to New England with Elias Terrill when he was carrying the powder to Cambridge."

"No," said John, "we haven't forgotten it, and we have n't forgotten the horses we lost in Connecticut either. You have n't heard anything about them, have you?"

"No," replied his father, "though I'm half-inclined to think that if ever they should let old Dan, the one you rode, get loose that he would start straight for Elizabeth Town, and would find his way here too."

"I wish they would," said John. "I miss him."

"I've no fault to find with you," said his father, "about the loss of those horses. That was one of the fruits of war, and something that could n't be helped. You'll do better another time."

"I want to," replied John.

"But it's about something almost of the same kind that I'm going to talk with you this morning," said his father, as he smiled at the eagerness that at once became manifest upon the faces of the boys.

"The great lack at Cambridge still continues to be powder. Elias Terrill has told me since he came home of how Washington was in dire stress. If he should be attacked, that lack would be the greatest drawback; and if he wanted to make an attack, this same lack of powder would be his greatest obstacle."

“But he got the other powder all right, did n’t he?” said John.

“Yes,” said Mr. Shotwell, “but there was so little of that as to make it of very small account. The truth of the matter is, boys, that we’ve been gathering a store of powder here at Elizabeth Town. We’ve been working at it very quietly, for we did n’t want any one to know much about it.”

He began to pace back and forth in the room with his hands behind him, and remained silent for some time. The boys glanced at each other, expressing with their eyes the pleasure which they thought was again coming to them of taking part in some expedition, although just what it was to be they could not yet tell; but when his father began once more to speak, it was to offer them more than they had dared to hope.

“I don’t know why I should hesitate, boys, to tell you just exactly what we have in mind. It is n’t that I’m afraid of you, and yet it is so easy for matters that ought to be kept strictly secret to leak out.”

“We’ll never tell anybody,” said John impulsively.

“I know you would not intend to,” said Mr. Shotwell, “and yet I have known of boys letting out some things, even when they did n’t intend to.”

“That’s so,” said Joseph, “and I’m the one.”

“But I don’t think you will now,” said Mr. Shot-

well, "and so I'll tell you just what we have in mind. We've gathered here a store of six tons and a half of powder. It's more than likely that we might be called upon to use it ourselves, and if any one knew that we thought of sending away the most of the powder that we have on hand it might make quite a feeling here, besides throwing the town open to possible depredations by the enemy."

"What are you going to do with it?" said John quietly.

"We're going to use it where there's the greatest need of it, and just now that is at the headquarters of the Continental Army at Cambridge. If the British should fall upon our soldiers there, and be able to defeat them, it would put an end to any prospect, for the present at least, of successful resistance to the demands which Great Britain is making of us, to say nothing of ever making this an independent country, which a few of us are hoping will come to pass."

"How are you going to send the powder?" said John.

"We're going to get it out of the town just as quietly as we can to-morrow morning before sunrise. We've got ten teams, all made up from some of the best horses in the neighborhood. We're going to cover the powder wagons with hay, just as we did before, and then we're going to have every pair of teams keep close together."

“What do you mean by that?” said John.

“Why, simply,” replied his father, “that we shall not have the whole ten wagons keep close together. We’ll only have two do that, and by cutting the ten teams into five parties, and when once they’ve crossed the Hudson by having them leave an hour or two between them as they go on, we hope to divert suspicion, and to have them pass as simply wagonloads of hay. You see at this time of the year there is always a great deal of hay being carted, and we can’t think of any safer or better way.”

“Why don’t you send them by water?” asked Joseph.

“The harbor is closed at Boston, and there is almost too much danger from the British boats, anyway. We don’t care to run any risks that we can avoid, and while of course there is more or less danger the best way we can fix it, still we hope to send the powder over land, especially since two such sharp youngsters as you are to form the rear guard on horseback, we think we can get it safely through.”

“Well, I hope so,” said John, “as there’s no place in the world I want to see so much as I do the headquarters of the army, and I should be glad to go in the way you have just suggested.”

“I think you’ll be very apt to see that, and General Washington, too, before you come home again,” said his father as he rose. “You’ll be ready to start before sunrise to-morrow morning, and all the

teams will keep pretty well together till they get to Dobb's Ferry."

"Shall we go just the same way that we did before?" asked John.

"Yes," replied his father.

"Then perhaps we'll find a chance to pick up some of our old acquaintances again," said Joseph. "I should n't mind meeting those fellows at that tavern, who were so willing to bid us good-by that morning when they started us off without our horses."

"I rather think I should like to see them again, too," said John; "that is, if we have our friends along."

In accordance with the plan which had been devised, the expedition started early on a morning in August, 1775. The boys were in high spirits and hoped before they returned from Cambridge to redeem the misfortune which had fallen upon them so recently, through their unfortunate expedition to the hut on the meadows.

The day was sultry and the progress they made was comparatively slow. As they stopped to rest beneath a tree by the roadside, Joseph said: "John, what did you say the name of that horse is that you're riding?"

"Mike," replied John.

"Then he is probably of Hibernian extraction," said Joseph.

"No, of Japanese, I guess," replied John.

"Japanese?" said Joseph. "What do you mean?"

"Don't you remember that sailor who used to come to Elizabeth Town so often, who said he'd been around the world?"

"What, the one that used to put up at the Red Lion?" said Joseph.

"Yes," said John; "the one that said he'd been around the world. Don't you remember what he said about the Japanese Islands?"

"Yes; I remember some of the stories he told about them," replied Joseph.

"Well, don't you remember what he said the ruler of Japan was called?"

"Yes," replied Joseph; "Mikado."

"That's right," replied John, "and that's the name we gave this colt up at the farm. They called him Mikado for a while, then they got to shortening it to Mick, and now they call him Mike."

"Well, he looks as if he could fight, and he certainly ought to with such a name as that," said Joseph with a laugh.

No events of interest occurred during the first three days of their journey. They crossed the Hudson at Dobb's Ferry, this time without changing horses or wagons, and then dividing into companies of two each, the expedition landed and pushed on for Cambridge.

At night the boys begged the privilege of sleeping on the hay, and permission was readily granted, although to avoid suspicion when they put up for the night at the country tavern, they had first gone to bed in the room which was assigned them, and when everything had become quiet they had crept down the stairs, and taken their places on top of the loads.

But nothing had occurred as yet of any special interest, and no suspicion had been aroused, they thought, as to the nature of the loads they were carrying. Certainly it would have taken a very shrewd observer to have suspected that the loads were anything else than that which they pretended to be, so skilfully had they been made.

On the afternoon of the third day, when the boys had dropped a little behind the two loads for which they were acting as rear guards, as they were riding along through the country, they passed a farmhouse, and not far beyond it was a pasture in which they noticed several horses grazing. As they drew near, Joseph suddenly called the attention of his companion and said: "Do you see that horse over there in the lot? That's old Dan, as I'm alive."

John looked quickly in the direction in which his friend pointed, and said: "It is. I believe you're right, Joe. I know you're right," he added a minute later, "and I'll prove it."

"What are you going to do?" said Joseph.

“You just watch and see,” said John excitedly. “I’m going to stop here right at these bars and call him.”

“Are n’t you afraid to?” said Joseph.

“Afraid? No,” said John half-angrily.

“Yes, but some people may not think just as you do, especially if they happen to think they are the lawful owners of old Dan,” said Joseph.

“I don’t care whether they do or not,” replied John. “That’s my horse and I’m going to have him;” and leaping off from the horse which he was riding, and holding him by the bridle, he gave a peculiar whistle.

Old Dan evidently recognized it, for he at once raised his head and gave a whinny and began to look about him in every direction. When John repeated the whistle, he gave another whinny and started on the run for the bars where John was standing.

As he came near, John patted him upon the head, and letting down the bars he led him outside and taking part of the bridle threw it around his neck and remounting his horse started on once more, leading Dan as a very willing captive.

“You did that just in time, John,” said Joseph, “for there comes the man who thinks he’s the owner, across the lot;” and he pointed to a man who was running at the top of his speed toward them, and shouting and gesticulating as he came.

The boys made no reply, except to stop for a moment while John changed his saddle from one horse to the other, preferring that Mike should be led.

The man evidently thought that they were stopping for him, and when John mounted old Dan, and the boys put all three of the horses into a gallop, he shouted and called, in tones that might have been heard a long distance, for them to stop; but the boys gave no heed to him, and hardly so much as looked behind them. They pushed rapidly on, and soon disappeared behind some woods that were on their right.

"I wonder if that man will come after us?" said John.

"I rather think he will," said Joseph.

"Let him come if he wants to, then," replied John. "Here are our friends ahead of us now, and there are more not very far away, and we'll try and make things pleasant for him if he wants to come and talk to us."

"Still I think we shall hear from him again," said Joseph.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN INQUISITIVE STRANGER.

THE boys rejoicing, because they had found the horse which they long ago had given up as lost forever, quickly caught up with the party ahead of them, and even then were in some fear lest they should be pursued. Joseph made the suggestion that they should at once ride forward and consult Mr. Terrill as to what was best for them to do in case the angry man, who perhaps had regarded old Dan as his own, should follow them and strive to reclaim his property.

John at once fell in with Joseph's suggestion, and as quickly as possible they rode ahead and caught up with Mr. Terrill and his companion, who formed the advance guard of the party. He was surprised and pleased alike at the good fortune which John had had, and at once recognized old Dan as the horse which he himself had used many times before.

When the boys told him of the fear they had that they might be pursued, and that trouble might come, he suggested to them that he should exchange horses with John, and using Mike himself, should tie the horse on which he was then riding to the rear of the load, and that the boys, on different

horses, should then resume their places as a rear guard. If their fears should prove well founded, and any trouble arise from the man out of whose lot they had taken the horse, and he should catch up with them, then they were at once to let him know, and he would go back to their aid.

The boys had barely resumed their place in the rear of the party when the sound of galloping hoofs was heard behind them.

“That means business,” said Joseph. “That old fellow is coming after us. He did n’t act any of the time as if he was going to give up Dan without a struggle.”

“Let him come,” said John. “He won’t find him here, and if he tries to take him from the man who’s riding him, he’ll have a good-sized contract on his hands. Mr. Terrill is n’t the man to give up very easily, and he’ll find more music than the fifers ever could make.”

But the sound of their pursuer became more and more distinct now, and in a few moments they saw the would-be owner of Dan appearing around a bend in the road with his horse on the run. He was alone, however, and the boys laughed a little as they thought of the reception he was likely to meet. In a few moments he had caught up with them, and, bringing his horse to a walk, angrily demanded of the boys where the horse was which they had stolen out of his pasture.

The boys denied having stolen any horse, and told him that if he was looking for the horse which he himself must have stolen, they thought he would find him a little farther ahead, as they themselves had seen him there only a few moments before.

The man left them with an angry word, and rode on until he had caught up with Mr. Terrill, and when he saw what horse it was he was riding, he demanded at once that he should give him up. An angry dispute was held for some time, the stranger declaring that horse thieves frequently were hanged in that country, and that if he could have his way, every man that stole a horse would be strung up by the roadside in short order.

Mr. Terrill tried to explain to him how it was that Dan had been lost, and he gradually learned that the stranger had come into possession of the horse by buying him of a man, with whom he had had no acquaintance, for a mere song.

"That does n't make any difference," said Mr. Terrill; "the horse was stolen from the boys and you can't have it; and if you want to make any trouble about it, perhaps you'd better try it. We're on government business, I'd have you understand, and to delay us may make a little serious trouble for you."

The matter was finally compromised by Mr. Terrill paying him the small sum which he claimed he had given for the horse, and the man rode away not

at all contented, but trying to make the best of it all. He scowled at the boys as he passed them, and paid no attention to the derisive shouts of Joseph, who called after him that they would be back pretty soon for the other horse, which he had stolen, but which he must have hidden somewhere for the present.

The journey was resumed without any further adventures, and a few hours later the boys heard behind them the sound of another horse, which evidently was coming toward them.

“There comes your man again,” said Joseph.

“I don’t believe it,” said John. “He’s had enough for one day, and he won’t be apt to trouble us again very soon;” and they soon perceived that it was a stranger who was approaching, and as he drew rein and brought his horse to a walk by their side, they saw that he was an elderly man whose expression was decidedly peaceful.

He entered at once into a conversation with the boys and tried to draw from them something that would explain what the object of their journey was, and where they were going; but they had learned by experience not to be confidential with strangers, and even Joseph was now gaining the mastery of his tongue.

“You’ve noticed, boys,” said the old man, “that I was riding in somewhat of a hurry. Well, I was hurrying somewhat,” he went on, as the boys

nodded in reply, "for I had a strange experience back here a little ways. I saw twenty women start out from a tavern and march along in regular ranks with three men as a flank guard. I was a good deal puzzled at the sight and wanted to know what was going on. They paid no attention, however, to me, so I followed them for a mile or so, and saw them march straight to Mr. Pitkin's store back here, where there was a lot of sugar which was designed for the army. They marched straight for the store, and without saying by your leave, they took over two hundred pounds of that sugar and started off. When they saw me they took me, I guess, for one of the owners of it, and they started for me, but I was pretty well mounted, as you see, so I made good my escape."

He laughed as he told them the story, and the boys laughed with him.

"That's the first time I ever heard of the women going to war," said Joseph. "They don't do it around New York."

"Then you're from New York, are you?" said the old man.

Joseph saw that he had made another mistake, but he collected his thoughts in time to say what was the truth. "No, we don't live in New York, but I've been there a good many times."

"Well, I knew as soon as I heard you talk that you didn't live very far from there, but I don't

believe you can tell me as much about New York as I can tell you."

The boys remained silent, wondering what their visitor would have to say.

"You don't know what the first name of it was, do you?"

"Yes," said John; "it was Manhattan."

"That's right," said the old man; "but who was the first recorded visitor there?"

"Why, the Dutch, I think," said Joseph.

"You're wrong," said the old man with a laugh. "Henry Hudson, who was sent out by the Dutch in 1609, was the first modern discoverer of the bay; but the first recorded visitor there was a Florentine traveler named Verrazane."

"I never knew that," said John.

"You are n't informed about your home as you ought to be."

"But that is n't our home," protested Joseph.

"Well, it is n't very far from there," said the old man. "Now see if you can tell me when the first real settlement was made there."

The boys were silent, not wishing to confess their ignorance, and yet neither of them was able to answer his question.

"I shall have to tell you, I see," said the old man. "It was in 1621. Do you know what they paid for the island of Manhattan when they first gained possession of it?"

The boys again acknowledged their ignorance.

“Well, they bought it of the Indians,” said the old man, “in 1626, with beads and buttons and some other trinkets, worth altogether less than five pounds. Do you know what its first name was?” he continued.

“Yes,” said John; “Amsterdam.”

“Fort Amsterdam,” said their companion, correcting them. “Now who was the first governor?”

“I know that,” said John; “his name was Van Twiller.”

“Who followed him then?”

“I don’t know,” said John.

“It was a little pussy Dutchman named Kilft, and the third director-general was Petrus Stuyvesant. I could tell you a good many more things about it; for example, how that in 1664, when it became English, it had fifteen hundred inhabitants, and the first fire company they had was in 1658, and how they called it the ‘Rattle Watch.’ The first night watch they had was in 1696; it commenced at nine o’clock at night, marching through the streets, ringing bells and calling out the time of the night, and telling the weather. The watchman made the rounds once an hour, and kept it up till sunrise.”

“I never knew that,” said Joseph.

“No, I see you don’t know as much about your home as you ought to. I might tell you a good many other things if I chose. Seventy-five years

ago they hung lanterns on poles in the streets for street lights, and the first stage line to Philadelphia they had was in 1730. It ran once in two weeks. Do you know what the name of the college there is?"

"Yes," replied John; "King's."

"That's right," replied the man; "that was opened in 1753 with ten students. Do you know when the first bound book was made in the colony?"

The boys began to look foolish. They never realized how little they knew about the region in which they lived.

"Well," said the stranger, "the first bound book ever made in the country was in New York in 1694, and the first paper published was in 1725. Now perhaps you can tell me," he added with a shrewd look at the boys, "when the first ferry to Jersey was started."

The boys shook their heads, and the old man answered his own question.

"It was in 1763. Well, I think I've talked enough to you on that line. Perhaps you'd like to know a little about the condition of things at Boston."

The boys looked up in quick surprise, wondering if the man did know of the place for which they had started.

"I was near there a little while ago," said the old

man, "and I heard that twelve transports, under the protection of three war vessels with about a thousand men on board, had just returned from a three weeks' cruise. They'd been to Gardiner's and Fisher's islands, they're not far from New London, you know, where they'd stolen about two thousand sheep, and more than a hundred head of cattle. They also had taken an outward bound vessel, which had about forty head of cattle and thirty sheep on board. That's fine business for a powerful country like Great Britain, isn't it, boys? Seems like quite a come-down from such work as William did, to killing sheep in the Colonies."

The boys were interested but said nothing by way of reply, so determined were they that they would not let slip any word that should even indirectly disclose their plans; but the eagerness with which they hailed his story left the stranger in no doubt as to which side in the struggle they leaned.

"I've been in Cambridge," he said, "a good many times. In fact I was there when General Washington, under the old elm, took command of the Colonial forces. They have just had a great time there. I hear they had a dinner in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the first opposition in England to the plan of the ministers for making slaves of the Colonists. The field officers of the sixth brigade met at the house of Jonathan Hastings, and they drank fourteen toasts."

"They must have been in good fighting trim when they got through," said John.

The old man laughed and said: "Their spirits rose, I presume, as they poured the spirits into them. At any rate among the toasts were: 'The Nineteenth of April, 1775,' 'The President of the Continental Congress,' 'A speedy export to all the enemies of America,' and 'Immortal honor to that patriot and hero, Dr. Joseph Warren'; but I can't stay here to talk with you any more," he continued. "I may see you again, however, in Cambridge."

The boys looked up, wondering if they had said anything that would lead him to think that that was the place they were seeking.

The old man laughed again as he said: "When you go back to New Jersey you want to look up some things about Elizabeth Town, for the next time I see you I may want to ask you more questions about that than I did about New York."

The boys were still more confused, wondering how he could possibly know that they were from New Jersey. The old man enjoyed their confusion and said: "When you get all this powder safely at Cambridge, I want you to come and see me;" and he laughed aloud at the consternation that was apparent on both faces.

"I'd like to know," said Joseph, "if I may be so bold, how you know so much."

"That's easily explained, when you know that I

was sent just to see that your expedition was moving on all right ;” and he laughed heartily, as putting his horse into a gallop, he soon left them behind. The last words they heard from him were: “ You are doing very well, boys. I don’t think any stranger will learn very much from you, not even about the the part of the country we live in.”

“ What a funny old man he was !” said Joseph, “ but I’ll tell you what I’m going to do, John, just the minute I get home ; I’m going to learn all I can about New Jersey, and I’m not going to be tripped up again, as we’ve been to-day, on the history of our own neighborhood.”

The day passed on, and when night drew near they halted at a tavern in a little village, and made their preparations to spend the night there. They little knew what strange experiences they were to have, and what unusual events would occur before the morning came.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JOSEPH'S EMPTY ROOM.

THE farther Mr. Terrill led the expedition, of which he was in charge, the more anxious he became. He was more and more afraid that some one in the country through which they had been passing might have suspected the true object they had in view, and by sending word in advance of them, might be making trouble for them. As they came nearer their destination, he increased his watchfulness and redoubled his zeal.

When the members of the party halted at the little tavern which we mentioned in the last chapter, they used unusual precautions in their preparations for the night.

“What shall we do with the load to-night?” said Mr. Terrill to the boys.

“It’s about our turn to stay on guard,” said John, “and we’ll both sleep on the load if you want us to.”

“I hardly dare risk that,” said he, “for don’t you remember how I said that ‘one boy was a boy and two boys were only half a boy’? Not that I mean that you won’t be careful,” he quickly added, as he saw how hurt the boys were at his words; “but

because I think some one of more experience ought to be on guard to-night."

"We'll do whatever you want us to," said John quietly, "and we'll do it the very best we can. We can't do more than that."

"I know that," said Mr. Terrill, "and I am more than pleased at what you have done thus far; but I feel so anxious about the success of this expedition, that I think I'll stay on guard myself to-night, and I'll have you stay with me, John, if you're willing to, and we'll both sleep on the hay; but we'll go to our rooms in the tavern first, just as if we expected to sleep there, and then in a little while, after everything is quiet and all are in bed, we'll come out here and take our places on the load."

Joseph was to have a room by himself that night, although apparently it had been assigned to both the boys. They both were in the room, sitting quietly in the darkness and waiting for the time to come when John should join Mr. Terrill in the watch over the load, and in low tones had been talking about the exciting scenes through which they had passed and the more exciting events which they believed to be before them, when they were startled by the sound of men entering the room next to theirs.

"You're going to have neighbors to-night," said John.

"They'll keep me from getting lonesome," replied

Joseph, "though I don't think I shall stay awake very long to entertain them. I have n't been more tired any day since I left home."

"Hush!" said John in a low tone, laying his hand upon his companion's shoulder. The partition which separated their room from the next was of thin matched boards, without plastering, and did not prevent the words in the room adjoining theirs from being heard. John had caught a word which startled him, and recalling Mr. Terrill's anxiety and his own increasing fears, he was alert and quick to catch the signs of any threatening danger.

Joseph responded to John's touch, and both the boys remained silent and listening.

The men in the next room were whispering, and evidently thought their words could not be heard; but their whispers were so loud and penetrating that they were heard more easily than they would have been if the men had spoken in louder tones. That which they heard was enough to startle the boys, for the words which they caught had reference to the very party of which they were members. They soon became convinced that the men knew what was being carried under the hay, as well as who were carrying it, and where they were going.

Satisfied at length that they had learned of a real danger, and of something that was threatening them that very night, John told Joseph that he must remain awake and watch his neighbors, and that if

anything unusual occurred, he must report at once to Mr. Terrill and himself, who would be on guard on the load.

“Hear everything you can hear,” whispered John, “and if anything is done that we ought to know, make a break for us.”

Both boys were highly excited, and John's heart was beating rapidly as on tip-toe he left the room, and after he had closed the door as quietly as he could, he made his way down the stairs and out to the load, where he found Mr. Terrill already on guard.

When he had joined him, in low tones he told him of the discovery he had made in Joseph's room and of the danger which he believed was threatening them that very night. Mr. Terrill listened attentively, and his anxiety was greatly increased at the report which his young friend brought him.

“There's nothing for us to do, John,” said Mr. Terrill at last, “but to stay here and keep wide awake till morning. We shall have to be on our guard to-night as we never have been before; but you boys have done a great thing for us to-night, and I never shall say a word again about two boys being a half a boy, at least the two boys we have with us, who are a host in themselves.”

The hours of the night passed on, and the morning had nearly come, and as yet nothing unusual had occurred. John had become very sleepy, and

more than once found himself dozing ; but a touch on the shoulder by Mr. Terrill always aroused him, and he would make unusual efforts to keep himself awake.

They wondered why Joseph had not come to them, and whether anything unusual had happened to him to keep him from following out his plans. Perhaps he had been shut in his room, or the men had heard him when he was trying to make his way out to the load and had held him in the tavern. A dozen different surmises rose in John's mind, and he became more and more anxious, not merely at the danger which threatened their load, but at those into which he imagined his friend might have fallen ; and yet there was nothing for them to do where they were but to wait and continue their watch.

John thought he had never seen the stars twinkle as they did that night, and he was very sure that the minutes never before in his experience had dragged themselves on so slowly. His desire to sleep returned after a time, and he was once more aroused by Mr. Terrill, who was gently shaking him.

"John, do you think you could make your way up to Joseph's room without waking any one? I don't know but you'd better go up there and see if anything has happened to him."

"Yes, I think I could," replied John. "I'll go right away." And he was just making preparations to slip off from the load when Mr. Terrill's hand was

again laid upon him, and in a low whisper he told him to wait for a few minutes.

He called his young companion's attention to two forms which he saw just coming around the tavern front and going out into the road. Both of them watched the new-comers as long as they could see them in the darkness, but they did not approach the load, and soon disappeared down the road.

Mr. Terrill, greatly relieved, then said to John: "I think it will be safe enough for you to go now; but do you know one of those men made me think of Joseph."

"That's just what I thought," replied John in a low tone. "I wonder if it was."

"I hardly think it could have been Joseph," replied Mr. Terrill. "What would he be doing out here in the darkness, going down the road with another man? But you can go into the tavern and find out, if you can, whether he's there or not, and whether anything has occurred that we ought to know since you left him."

John quickly slipped off from the load and ran as rapidly and quietly as he could around behind the tavern, and stood for a few moments under the window of the room in which he knew his friend had been. He listened attentively and tried to learn whether anything unusual was going on within. He started whenever the leaves upon a tree near him were blown by the wind, and was in a nervous

tremor for fear that some one had seen him, and might be stealing upon him in the darkness.

After listening for several minutes and hearing no sound from the room, he crept around to the other side of the tavern, and opening the front door, which was left unfastened through the night, he began to make his way up the stairs, stopping at every step to see if his presence had been discovered. When at last he had mounted the winding stairway, and stood in the hall on the second floor, not far from where Joseph's room was, he again stopped and listened.

He was startled as he saw a light under the door of the room next to Joseph's, and said to himself: "That's funny! That's the room those men were in whom we heard talking. I wonder if they're in there now? It may be that they've made some trouble for Joe, and that's the reason he has n't reported to us before." But even while he was speaking to himself he was astonished as he saw the door of the room from which the light came, slowly opened.

He was frightened, and yet had presence of mind to step quickly back into a recess in the hall from which he could see what was occurring without being in great danger of being seen himself.

The door was at length opened, and a man with a candle in his hand stepped forth into the hall. John stepped a little farther back into the dark recess

in which he stood, knowing that if the light should fall upon him the man could not fail to see him. But glancing quickly up and down the hall he took his candle and stepped out, and, to the great surprise of John, went at once to the door of Joseph's room.

What could be the meaning of it all? Was he meditating some mischief to Joseph? Was his friend in personal danger? Should he shout and call for help?

Even while these questions were in John's mind, the stranger opened the door of his companion's room and stepped quickly inside and closed it after him. John was so startled that when the man disappeared from sight he hardly knew what to do next. Evidently Joseph's door had not been fastened, and the manner in which the man had entered the room showed that he was not expecting any resistance from within.

What should he do? Remain where he was and wait for further events? This seemed to the anxious boy the better plan, and so he remained quietly in the recess. It seemed to him that a long time had passed, and nothing at all had been done to furnish any solution of the mystery which was perplexing him. He noticed, however, that no light now came from under the door of Joseph's room.

John was not sure whether this had been so at the first or not, for he had neglected to notice it when

the man had first gone in; but he was sure that the man had not come out again, and as he waited, it seemed to him that anything would be better than this long-continued silence which was fast becoming unendurable. Besides he knew that Mr. Terrill was waiting anxiously for his return, and must be greatly puzzled at his long absence.

It seemed to John that he must do something, and he disliked to go back to the load without doing something to solve the mystery, and yet he was more than half-afraid to try to enter Joseph's room. From the words which they had overheard, he knew that these strangers were ready for almost anything. Any men who would attempt to blow up a load of powder would not hesitate for a moment to deal savagely with a young boy who might stand in their way.

At last, when John could endure the strain no longer, he decided that he would approach the door in Joseph's room and rap upon it. As the handle of the latch was upon the outside of the door, if any unusual response should be made to his summons, he decided that he would hold that fast, bracing his feet against the wall, and call as loudly as he could for help. That would arouse all the men who were sleeping in the tavern, and he knew that would be the very thing which these plotters would not want done.

He began to make his way quietly along the hall,

stopping at almost every step and breathless in his excitement to see if any one was watching him, or if any danger was approaching. The darkness was so thick that it was with the greatest difficulty that he could see his way. It seemed to him that boards had never creaked so loudly as those upon which he stepped, as he approached Joseph's room, but at last he had come near enough to touch the door, but it was some time before he could gain the courage to rap upon it.)

At last he did this timidly, and almost breathless waited for the response. His hands were ready to grasp the latch and to hold the door if any danger threatened him from within. No response came to the rap, however, and then the trembling boy repeated it three or four times, and as no response at all was received, he decided to try to open the door. Enough light had come through the cracks to make him certain that the candle was burning in the room, and he knew that the advantage would be with him at first, as the darkness would be on his side.

It was some time, even after his thumb had been placed upon the latch, before he could get his courage up to the point of opening the door, but at last he did this quickly, and at once stepped back out of the light. But no response was made even to this abrupt measure, and as no one in the tavern seemed to be aware of his presence, he soon stepped

back again to a place where he could look into the room without being seen himself. No one was there, and when he entered he found that even Joseph's clothes were gone.

The bed had not been slept in, and the only visible sign that any one had been in the room at all was the open window.

Sadly puzzled, John took the candle and began to make an examination of the room. He did not know but his friend might have left a note behind him, or some token to show that he had gone away ; but after a careful search not a thing could John find. The only knowledge he had gained was that his friend was not there, that the bed had not been slept in, and that there was nothing to show what had become of him. He blew out the candle, and as quietly as he could, made his way down the stairs, and rejoined Mr. Terrill in his watch upon the load.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ENEMY BAFFLED.

IT is time for us to return once more to the fortunes of Evart and his companion, Ethan Cobb, whom we left just as they were escaping from the building in which they had been penned through the trickery of Ethan's enemy.

Ethan was satisfied that this man, whom he had worsted in his dealings with him in the "London Trading" and "Whale-boat Warfare," would not be satisfied to let things easily pass by now. The malignant way in which he had regarded them all through their voyage from England, and the hatred which he had manifested after their arrival at the West Indies, all went to show that he would not easily let go a grudge which he had cherished for so long a time.

They were satisfied, therefore, that this experience through which they had just passed would not be the last they would have with him, and when they found themselves freed from their prison house, and able to make their way back to the shore, many thoughts had been in their minds. The disappointment, which they met when they found that the ship had gone upon which they had hoped to make

their passage home, left them free to consider the dangers and perplexities which they were well aware would still face them.

They were rejoiced to have escaped from the place into which they had been lured, but although they found that they had been disappointed in one hope, they were by no means cast down. Their perilous adventures during the past few weeks only served to make them more watchful now, and at once they resolutely set about discovering some new way out of their difficulties.

When they turned from the dock and started back up the street, almost the first person they met was the colored man who had led them on by his false promises, and had brought them into their last difficulty.

Evart uttered an expression of surprise as he saw him, and gave a warning word to his companion, but the surprise which he had was not equal to that which the negro manifested. He gave one glance at the two men whom he had left securely fastened, as he thought, in a place from which they could have found no escape without his assistance. His look was one of mingled astonishment and fear. He was satisfied after a moment that they were indeed the men who had been placed in his charge, and his feeling of fear seemed to increase. He stopped in his walk and looked up and down the street, and then with one exclamation of dismay

started to run. He did not stop even to glance behind him, and it became evident to Evart that others beside himself were in great fear of Ethan's enemy. He soon disappeared down the street, and if they had not been so busied with their thoughts about their own safety, they would have laughed heartily at the ludicrous sight which the fleeing negro presented.

But the experience which they had just had, served to make them more watchful, and when once they were satisfied that there was no immediate hope of their being able to return to the Colonies, Ethan said: "We shall have to keep very quiet now. I think perhaps the best thing we can do will be to find some room in a house that is not very well known, and stay there for a few days."

"You're not going to give up looking for a return to the Colonies, are you?" said Evart, somewhat disappointed at the coolness of his Yankee friend.

"Give up going back to the Colonies?" repeated Ethan. "Not much; that's the very thing I'm not going to do, but we'll have to hide away from this fellow who is after us; and if we can throw him off the track for a little while, we'll stand a good deal better chance of making it. I don't believe this darkey will tell his boss right away that we've broke loose, but it won't be long before that fellow will know it. I think that darkey will catch it then

worse than we have, but we 'll have to make a little hay while the sun shines now, and try to find a place where we can be safe and keep quiet for a few days."

Evart agreed to this suggestion, and in a little while they found a room in the house of an old man who lived alone with his wife on a quiet street. There they remained for a few days scarcely going out at all. The old man had many curious questions to put to them, but they pretended at first not to understand his broken English, and so avoided giving him very much information; but satisfied after a little time that they could trust him somewhat, they sent him down to the dock one day to try to learn if there was any vessel expected soon from the Colonies, or that was going to sail for any of the ports of America.

When he brought back the report that he'd been unable to learn of any either coming or going, Ethan said: "Well, we 'll stay where we are then. I think maybe we need a good rest after all we've done."

Evart, whose impatience daily became more marked, made no reply, and yet he quietly acquiesced and remained within the house. No signs had been seen of their enemy, and they felt quite certain that their hiding-place had not been discovered; but each day they sent the old man down to the dock upon the same errand.

For a long time he only brought back the same

report, but at last, there came a day when he returned with the glad news that there were two schooners soon to leave, as he thought, for Salem.

Ethan asked him many questions, and at last became certain that the old man had brought back a true report. His experience with his enemy, however, had made him very suspicious, and he was afraid that some trick was involved even in this report which had been brought and for which the two men had been waiting so eagerly.

"I more 'n half-think the old man is right, and yet I don't want to run any chances," Ethan said to Evart after their host had gone down the stairs and left them alone.

"How are you going to find out whether he's right or not?" asked Evart.

"Oh, I've got a scheme," replied Ethan. "My Yankee mind is n't very slow, you know."

"No, I know that," replied Evart; "but I don't believe in your schemes very much. If it had n't been for your tricks and your trying to get something for nothing by your 'London Trading,' we wouldn't have had any trouble here at all."

"Oh, well," said Ethan, "I wouldn't have lost getting the best of that measley man for all that we've been through. I'll sell him some wooden nutmegs yet before I'm done with him. They say that's what every Connecticut Yankee has to do some time before he dies."

"Yes," replied Evart, "that's all right; but what about getting a passage on these schooners?"

"I don't know that there are any schooners there," replied Ethan. "But when it gets a little dark, I'm going to send you down to the dock to find out."

"Me?" asked Evart. "Why don't you go yourself, you're so much shrewder than I am?"

"Yes; and that's the very reason I'm not going myself," replied Ethan. "They won't be half as quick to suspect you as they will me, and it's a good deal better for you to go alone."

"Well, anything is better than staying penned up here," said Evart; "so I'll be glad to go."

When the sun had set and it had become dark enough to further his plans, Evart started out alone for the dock. It was a relief for him to escape from the stifling room. Even the sense of his own danger did not rob him of the pleasure of being able to move about once more in the open air, but he was, however, on the alert, and while he was watchful of all the men he met, he still tried to pass along the street in such a way as not to arouse the suspicions of any one.

He arrived at the dock safely, and felt satisfied that no one had paid any attention to him as he came, and his heart beat rapidly as he saw two schooners at the dock.

"The old man was right," he said to himself; "at

least so far. Now, if I can only find out just where these schooners are bound for, and if it turns out that they are going to America, I shall be all right. I know well enough they 'll let us work our passage home," he again said to himself, and elated at the thought, he approached a little group of men whom he saw standing together on the dock. As he hailed one he said: "Do you know where those schooners are bound for?" The man to whom he spoke turned about and peered at him curiously and said: "Yes; they're bound for the Colonies."

"When are they going to sail?" asked Evart. But before he could receive a reply a man stepped out from the midst of the sailors, and Evart at once recognized him as Ethan's enemy. He did not wait for any further words, but turned at once and ran swiftly up the street. He did not know whether he was being pursued or not, but his fear increased his speed, and he soon found himself far from the shore, but in a part of the town that was new to him.

It was some time before he could make his way back to the quarter with which he was familiar, but when at last he did, he started for the place where he had left Ethan. He was not running now, and whenever he saw any man approaching he stepped back out of sight and waited for him to pass. Satisfied at length that he was not being pursued, he started again on a brisk walk, from which he did not

cease until he had arrived at the house where Ethan was and had closed the door behind him.

It was an exciting story which he had to tell his companion, and during its recital Ethan many times shook his head, and kept uttering the expression, "That's bad! That's bad!"

It was at length decided that they should remain quietly in the room for a day or two, and then that they should send the old man with a letter for the captain of one of the schooners, and trust to that for securing them a passage home. Their impatience, however, did not allow them to wait long, and Evart wrote a carefully worded letter, in which he told of the predicament in which he and his companion were, and begged of the captain, whose name he did not know, that he would receive them on board and allow them to work their passage home.

They did not tell the old man anything of their plans and hopes, and gave him the letter with the instructions that he was to seek out the captain of either one of the schooners, and that he should in person deliver the note to him and wait for the reply. They promised him a reward if he were careful, and at last sent him forth.

Ethan waited philosophically for the reply to come, but Evart in his impatience walked up and down the room like a lion in his cage. It seemed to him that he could have made the trip a dozen

times in the time the old man took, and when at last he did return, Evart's hands trembled so in his excitement that he could hardly take the letter which he brought him.

The letter which the old man gave him more than satisfied him, and the captain expressed his entire willingness to receive them on board, and to carry them without charge back to the Colonies. He also promised, if they wished it, that he would come for them if they felt afraid to come alone to the schooner. The time which he named for their sailing was only a week away, and there was nothing they could do except to remain where they were. They meanwhile sent him word that they would not come to the schooner until just about the time of her departure, and they asked the captain to send them word just when he would be ready.

The days which had passed slowly before seemed to drag now, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Ethan could prevail upon his young friend to remain within the house.

"Don't get uneasy," said Ethan; "you don't want to spoil everything now just when the very time has come that we've been waiting so long for. Just see how quiet I am," he would say; but when the week had passed at last, and they had received no word from the captain, Ethan himself began to be very anxious.

"He's forgotten us; I know he has," said Evart.

"No, he has n't," replied Ethan, trying to make

his reply appear more hopeful than he himself really was. "He has n't got off just at the time he thought he would. He probably has been delayed a little and he does n't want us to come aboard ahead of time, as it might make trouble for him as well as for us."

"Well, if we don't hear anything by to-morrow night," said Evart, "I'll go down to the dock myself and see what's wrong;" but on the following afternoon a message was sent to the house, containing simply the words, "Come at once—disguise yourselves."

A disguise was something they had not thought of, and they had no time now in which to prepare one.

"We'll take the chances," said Ethan, "and start off right away." Evart wished to run, but Ethan managed to calm his young friend enough to bring him to a rapid walk, and they quickly passed down the street and came in sight of the dock. There they saw but one schooner and that almost ready for sailing. A part of the sails had been hoisted and there was every sign that she was going to put to sea at once. They started on the run then, and passing along the dock, just as they came to the gangplank they saw the enemy of whom they stood in such fear, standing near by with a half-dozen companions, evidently watching for their arrival.

Without a word, however, the two fugitives

jumped aboard just as a rush was made for them. The captain was waiting for them, and as soon as he saw them he gave out his order to cast off, and ordered the other men to stay on shore. Many angry words were exchanged, but the schooner meanwhile slowly began to draw away from the dock.

Ethan was in high glee. He called out to the angry man: "Don't try to catch a Connecticut Yankee. The next time you do, you'll lose more than you did when you had any 'London Trading' with him."

Evart was more rejoiced than his companion at their escape, although he had no disposition to taunt the angry and baffled man who stood upon the dock and watched them as they drew away. The shore soon began to disappear, and in the thought that he was going home Evart turned to the captain to learn what he had for him to do.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY.

TO say that John Shotwell was startled when he found that Joseph was not in his room would be a mild statement. At once he thought of the forms which he had seen departing in the darkness, one of which Mr. Terrill had thought was Joseph, in which opinion John also had been inclined to share.

He was trying to think out the meaning of it all as he went back to the load, but when he told Mr. Terrill what he had learned, he was as puzzled as John. In low tones they talked over the strange disappearance, and waited for something to occur to explain its meaning; but an hour passed on and nothing was seen or done which threw the least light upon their companion's whereabouts.

Where could Joseph be? Had he met with foul play? Had he been spirited away by those men whose words they had overheard, and which plainly showed that they knew of the expedition in which they were engaged?

John, who knew how impulsive his friend was, tried to assure himself that Joseph might have taken upon himself the task of blocking the party in some of their movements, and that when they had

seen him going down the road a short time before, that it was for some such purpose as that; but immediately he remembered how there was another man with him, and then he was more puzzled than ever. The man who had entered Joseph's room had done so evidently feeling sure of himself and without any fear as to whom he might meet when he entered.

The more John thought about it, the more puzzled he became, and he was trying hard to find some possible way out of the perplexity.

If Joseph were in trouble, surely he ought not to remain there on the load and leave him to bear the consequences of it alone. He knew that Joseph would not do that if he himself were in trouble, and his heart became more and more heavy as he thought over all the possible dangers into which Joseph might have fallen.

In the midst of these thoughts he suddenly felt Mr. Terrill pull his sleeve, and in a low whisper call his attention to some one he saw approaching down the road. The darkness was so intense that John at first could not make out anything, but looking steadily in the direction in which Mr. Terrill had pointed, he soon was certain that he saw two men approaching. They came very slowly, and every few minutes would stop to watch and look about them, but it was plain that stealthily they were coming nearer. John felt his own heart begin to

beat more rapidly, and he was not certain whether the men he saw approaching were the same two that, a short time before, he had seen disappear down the road, or whether they were men coming with evil designs towards the load.

He could see Mr. Terrill, as he reached for and cocked his gun. The excitement was becoming more and more intense. The two men had separated now, as one was going towards the tavern, and the other certainly was approaching the load. He came forward very cautiously, however, and at every few steps would stop to listen, glancing carefully meanwhile towards the tavern, and then in the direction of the load. As he came nearer, Mr. Terrill decided to wait no longer, and at once hailed him. It was with a great sigh of relief that John heard the reply.

"It's Joseph. Is that you, Mr. Terrill?" called out his friend.

"Yes," replied Mr. Terrill. "Come up here and tell us where you have been. Tell us all about it. We've been a great deal stirred up about you. When John found that you were not in your room and had n't slept there, we both of us were afraid that something had happened to you; but come up here and tell us all about it."

Joseph quickly obeyed the summons, and making his way to the top of the load, sat down beside his friends and began his story.

“ You see,” said he, “ right after John left my room and we had overheard those men talking, I was pretty badly scared. I did n’t feel very much better when I heard the door open and both those men go down the stairs. If I had done just what I wanted to, I should have cleared out, too, and come here, for I did n’t feel very much like a soldier. I was afraid those men might suspect me ; but then I stopped to think how it might come to pass that I should hear something there in the room or find out something that might be of use to you, so I tried to brace my heart and stay it out.

“ It was n’t more than fifteen minutes later when somebody came up the stairs and stopped at my door and rapped. When I opened it and saw that it was one of the men who had the room next to mine, I did n’t feel very much better. I said to myself, ‘ Your time ’s come now, and you ’re certainly in for it.’

“ I guess I must have looked pretty badly scared, for I did n’t say anything when I opened the door, but the man himself came in, and when he had shut the door he turned the button and then sat down on a chair.”

“ He whispered to me and wanted to know if I was alone. I had just spunk enough left to nod my head, though I did n’t know but he was going to go for me when he found there was n’t anybody else there ; but pretty quick he asked me if I’d

heard their talk in the next room. I nodded my head and then he wanted to know if I could make out anything they had said.

“ I did n't know just what to say, but I managed to nod my head again, and he told me that he was glad of it. Then he went on to tell me that he'd been drawn into the business against his will, but while he was n't very much of a Yankee he was only half Tory, and although he was very sorry the Colonies were making war he was just as sorry for the things the British soldiers were doing, and then, too, he went on to tell me how they had heard there was a lot of gunpowder going through to Cambridge, though he did n't tell me how they found that out. He said that he'd been drawn into the scheme of stealing it and hiding it or blowing it up.

“ The more he thought about it the meaner it seemed to him to take any hand against men when they were working as hard as the Continentals were, even if he did n't believe in all that they were doing; and when the other man had been talking with him in the next room about the plan he'd formed of blowing up the wagonload that night, his own heart went back on him. He knew that we were in the same party, and it popped into his head then that he might get out of it all by pretending to his companion that he'd find out from me all about the expedition and would get me out of the tavern so that there would n't be any danger of their being

heard when they were talking. Then he trusted to luck or something else to prevent the plans being carried out, and if he could report to the other man that the load was guarded and the watchers were armed, he thought it might put an end to the whole scheme.

“ He was mortally afraid the other man would find out something about it, and he did n’t like to appear at all as if he was going back on him, and yet at the same time he made out as if he was doing a favor to all concerned by preventing any trouble, and so he asked me to go outside with him and the other man would think that he’d got me out so that he could come to my room, and search it to see if he could find anything that would give him any more information there.

“ At first I did n’t like to go with him. I was afraid of him, to tell the truth ; but I looked him over pretty carefully, and made up my mind that if he and I had a tussle, I would n’t come out second best ; and I think the man noticed, too, that I might be a little scary about going away with him, for he told me a good many times that what he was telling me was gospel truth, and that what he was doing was out of the best of motives.

“ Finally I made up my mind that I’d chance it anyway. You know I never stop very long in taking risks, and I’m glad I did go this time, for when he finds out that we have regular guards on the

loads, and that they are armed, as I gave him to understand they were, and he tells the other man about it, I don't believe we'll be in any danger of any mischief from them to-night."

Mr. Terrill listened to Joseph's story and said: "I think you have done all right, Joseph. You may have saved us a good deal of trouble to-night. Sometimes I have been afraid that you might get us into trouble, as often you do things without stopping to think."

"I know it," said Joseph, "and that's what made me afraid to go with him to-night. Do you think we'd better start on now?"

"No," replied Mr. Terrill; "we'd be in more danger traveling in the darkness than we are here. I don't think we shall have much trouble here to-night, after what you've told us; but we'll keep a pretty careful watch till morning;" and all three of them remained awake till sunrise. But nothing unusual occurred, and early in the morning they resumed their journey. This adventure, however, was the last that they had before they arrived at Cambridge.

The country through which they now passed was very interesting to the boys, and they wondered how men were able to make their living there, it was so much rougher and more rocky than the fertile, level lands about their homes. But at last the journey was completed, and they had arrived at the head-

quarters of the army. This had been the great ambition of the boys, and their curiosity was very keen, and they were greatly interested in all they saw.

General Washington, whose personal bearing greatly impressed the boys, gave his receipt for the powder, simply saying that it had been received from "the South," as no one wished it to be known just where it had come from.

"I tell you, Joseph," said John, "General Washington does n't look as if he would ever give up, does he?"

"Not much, he does n't," replied Joseph; "and he does n't look as if he would be very gentle with his own men, if they went wrong, either."

"I don't know about that," replied John; "he looks to me like a good man."

"He's made some sharp rules for the soldiers anyway," replied Joseph. "If one of them gets drunk, or tells a lie or steals anything, or does n't obey, or is disrespectful to the officers, he just catches it."

"Who told you about it?" asked John.

"Oh, one of the soldiers," replied Joseph. "You see it does n't take me very long to get acquainted."

"Well, what do they do with the men if they are guilty?"

"They fine them or stand them in the pillory or fasten them in the stocks or make them ride a wooden horse. Sometimes they've whipped them

and drummed them out of the camp. He's also pretty sharp if any one of them swears, and he's up to the mark in making them attend divine service."

"You know so much about the soldiers here," said John, "maybe you know just how many there are of them."

"That's what I do," replied Joseph. "There are about fourteen thousand that they can count on."

"Do you know how many the British have?" asked John.

"This soldier I was talking with told me that they had about eleven thousand, five hundred; but they're all of the regular army and all disciplined troops, and they're worth more than twice as many of those who are only militia. Washington has organized his army in three divisions, and he's put twelve regiments in each division. He's tried to put the men from the same Colonies together, too, if he could. General Ward has charge of the right wing and he's stationed at Roxbury. General Lee has command of the left wing and he's put Sullivan in charge of Winter Hill, and Green in charge of Prospect Hill. General Putnam has charge of the centre at Cambridge."

"I don't see how you found out so much," said John.

"Oh, that's easy enough," said Joseph. "I don't go around with my eyes shut."

"I don't, either," replied John, "but I've learned

a little more about the college than I have about the soldiers."

"Well, you need n't tell me anything about it," replied Joseph. "I got all I wanted of school under that Tory Chase. I've been to see these riflemen that Daniel Morgan has brought up from Maryland, Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania. A good many of them are Irish and these New Englanders don't like them very much, but they look as if they could fight. They have on their breasts the motto 'Liberty or Death,' and they'll get one or the other — I know they will."

Mr. Terrill had made his plans, however, to return in a short time, and the boys tried to make the most of their opportunities while they had them.

But before they returned to New Jersey, John was to go on to Gloucester where a part of his mother's family was living, and visit them for a few days before he started for home. Joseph went with him, but somewhat reluctantly, for at the time he greatly preferred the excitement at Cambridge.

They were to return in time to go back with the men, and therefore started a little sooner from the famous old town than they otherwise would have done. Joseph never ceased to be thankful, however, that he went with his friend, for one of the most exciting events of his life occurred while they were at Gloucester.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FIGHT AND FLIGHT OF THE FALCON.

ON the day following the arrival of the boys at Gloucester they went down to the shore, and with great curiosity were watching the whalers and the fishermen who made their homes there. They were attracted during their walk by the sight of a crowd upon the shore which was rapidly increasing, and from which loud shouts were coming. Something exciting evidently was occurring, and the boys at once resolved that they must be on hand to see and share in it.

When they drew near to the assembly, they found that the crowd was watching a sloop-of-war, which they afterwards learned was the Falcon, and which was evidently chasing two schooners. The boys heard some one say that these schooners were from the West Indies, and were bound for the port of Salem.

They little knew who was on board of one of them, and how much greater their interest would have been if they could have seen the anxious face of Evart Van Slyke, who was watching the sloop with great anxiety.

He was in great fear, after all the perils through

which he had safely passed and the adventures which he had met, that now, at the very end of his voyage, and when he was within sight of his own country once more, he should meet with a misfortune again.

Although the boys did not know of the presence of their friend on board the schooner, they still became greatly excited in watching the manœuvres of the sloop. Captain Lindzee of the Falcon soon brought one of the schooners to, but the other, taking advantage of the wind, put into Gloucester harbor.

Lindzee was not at all dismayed by this, however, for, taking his prize with him, he chased the other schooner right into the harbor, and soon anchoring, sent out two barges with fifteen men in each, armed with muskets and swivels, after it.

There was a whaleboat also, which he fitted out with a lieutenant and six privates, and told them to seize the schooner and bring her under the Falcon's bow. But the militia and the people on the Gloucester shore were not uninterested spectators of all this, and the schooner, in response to their shouts, had come within the range of the shore.

The bargemen tried to board the schooner at the cabin windows, and then the people began to fire at them, and the lieutenant was hit in the thigh, and three of his men were killed, and he at once started back towards the man-of-war.

Lindzee seemed to be quite stirred up by this, and sent the other schooner and a little cutter he had to attend him after the other boat, and he said that he would cannonade the people on shore if they tried to interfere. He did n't wait for much interference, however, for he fired a broadside and seemed to take a fiendish delight in the havoc which his cannon made. They could hear him as he called out: "Now, my boys, we'll fire at the Presbyterian Church! Well, my brave fellows, one shot more and the house of God will fall before you!"

But he reckoned without his host; for while the cannon balls went through the houses in every direction, they did not hit any of the women or the children gathered in them, and only served to anger the patriots who were at the water-side, for they put out in their own boats and captured both the schooners, the cutter, the two barges, and every man in them.

The action had lasted for several hours, but the boys could learn of but one man who had been killed, although they saw two others who were wounded. The Gloucester patriots captured thirty-five of the man-of-war's men, and twenty-four of them they sent to the headquarters of the army; but the rest of them were men who had been pressed into the service and were only too glad to be allowed to return to their friends.

The boys shouted and sang with the crowd as

they watched Captain Lindzee warp off with only half of his men, having lost the prize boat, and without even a tender, except a little skiff that the wounded lieutenant had returned in.

The boys heard afterwards how the gunner of the Falcon, when he was released from close confinement, induced some of the Tories to go away with him, and made his escape to the Falcon. Great threats were made that if the fellow was ever taken again he would never get out of prison.

The men from the schooner came ashore for a time, but soon went back on board. Two of those who had been among the crew of one of the schooners did not return, however, with the others. John and Joseph were so busy in watching the men and listening to the story which they had to tell of the Falcon's pursuit that they did not see these two who remained on shore and who soon left the crowd and made their way to the tavern in the distance. It would have been a great surprise to them if they had seen each other, for one of them was the member of the Triumvirate who had been lost, as they supposed, months before in the fog off Staten Island, and had drifted out to sea.

They passed within a few hundred feet of each other, but each party had been interested in different events and their attention had been called in opposite directions, and as a consequence the meeting which so nearly came to pass was lost, and

in ignorance of each other's whereabouts they went their different ways.

In a short time the boys had finished their visit at Gloucester and returned to Cambridge, where they found Mr. Terrill's party ready to start for home on the following day, and reluctant as the boys were to leave the stirring scenes of the camp life, they prepared to accompany them on their homeward journey.

"We'll have no great danger going back," said Joseph. "We sha'n't have anything with us worth taking, so nobody'll try to steal from us or blow us up; and they don't care enough about us to bother us at all."

"That's so," replied John, "still I'm interested in some of the things we shall see on our way back home."

"There's one thing I'd like to see," said Joseph, "and that's my horse that those rascals stole. You're lucky enough to get old Dan back again, but I have n't seen anything of my horse. I think my father would be glad if I could only pick him out of some pasture, as you did yours."

"Well, we'll see," replied John. "We may find more than we expect to, before we get back to Elizabeth Town."

The next morning the little party of men who had brought the powder to Cambridge started forth on their journey home. They were all on horseback

and could make rapid progress now, and they pushed steadily onward. They listened to the stories which the boys had to tell of the experiences which they had met with on their former expedition, and some of them were more than half-inclined to stop and make a search for Joseph's missing horse.

It was, however, soon decided that it would not be wise to make any special attempt for this, but when they found one night when they had stopped at a little tavern that it was the very place from which Joseph's horse had been stolen, they made some inquiries of the landlord and said some sharp words to the hostler, but they both professed ignorance of the entire matter, and pretended not to recognize the boys, and refused even to believe that they had ever been there before.

Mr. Terrill decided that it would not be wise to make any trouble about the matter, as the horse was of less consequence than their own speedy return; and accordingly the party pushed on, making such haste as they could, and in much less time than the former expedition had occupied they had arrived safely at their homes in Elizabeth Town.

The welcome which the boys received was a warm one, and the satisfaction which was evident upon the face of Mr. Shotwell, as he listened to the reports of their behavior, was very marked.

He asked many questions about their journey

and the condition of the army, and expressed great pleasure at the report which they brought.

When the boys told him about the engagement which they had witnessed at Gloucester, he had no more idea than they that their young friend, Evart Van Slyke, could have been on board of one of the schooners.

In reply to the questions which John put to him as to whether anything new had been learned about the hut on the marsh, Mr. Shotwell replied that it was as much a mystery as before. He was yet more convinced, however, that secret operations were being carried on between some men at Elizabeth Town and those of Staten Island, and that supplies of some kind were constantly being sent over there.

"I'm afraid," he said to John, "that the men who are doing all this are not Tories, but in their hearts are good friends of the Colonies; but there is such a big profit in these secret operations that they have not quite moral courage or patriotism enough to make them keep out of such dealings. I am afraid that a good many men, whom we don't suspect, are engaged in this, and that a good many friends will become bitter enemies when the truth at last comes out."

"I've been thinking a good deal about that hut since I've been gone," said John; "and I don't like to give up that I've been beaten. I've been turning over a good many schemes and plans in my

mind, and I'm going to find out something about it yet, if I can."

"I don't know whether you'll find anything in the hut or not," said his father. "I've become very doubtful about that. I know these things are going on, but that shanty didn't appear to enter very much into the business."

"I still think it had something to do with it, though," said John. "I can't believe that Schoolmaster Chase was going up and down the inlet for nothing, and I don't believe that door was locked when Joseph and I went there without some good reason for it. I believe that those dead fish on the floor and those nets hung up around the walls were all put there just to throw us off the scent."

"Well, success to you, John," said his father. "I don't believe you like the remarks of the men you had with you, when the other expedition turned out as it did. That may be one secret of your perseverance."

"I'll own up," said John with a slight flush on his face, "that that was n't a very happy time for me, and perhaps that may be one reason why I'm bound to succeed in finding out about it; but I've thought of a new scheme, and one that I'm sure will help me."

"What is it?" asked his father.

"I don't want to tell you just yet," said John. "I want to put it to the test first and see whether it will work or not. Maybe I'll tell you a little later."

It was the thought of Hannah which had given John a new inspiration. He knew that she was living in Schoolmaster Chase's family, and he also knew that she shared with him in his intense dislike of that Tory. She was as firm and true a friend of the Colonies as any of the Whigs, and while John did not think that she would be disloyal to her own family, he still knew that she was living, as she then was compelled to, under protest, and that if she had been allowed to follow her own wishes would not have remained there for a day.

He hesitated at first as to whether he should not try to see her, but his former experience on the island, and the fear that in the strained relations between the people who dwelt there and those who lived on the Jersey shore, a visit from him might lead to some serious trouble, he resolved to entrust the matter to a letter, and felt sure that he could succeed in sending a message to her.

Accordingly he wrote a full account of his desires and plans, and told Hannah that if she were willing, he should be glad to have her tell him anything she might know concerning the dealings of the schoolmaster with the people at Elizabeth Town.

John waited with a good deal of eagerness for her reply, and the message which came to him on the second day after he sent his letter was one that fulfilled his highest hopes, and gave him a clew to the mystery.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY.

JOHN had written the letter to which we referred in our last chapter, relying upon the friendship of Hannah, and the feeling which he knew she entertained for the Colonies. In the reply which she sent, she had promised that on the following afternoon about sunset, she would take her own little rowboat and start from Staten Island and row up the bay. If John should happen to be rowing in that part of the bay somewhere near the same time, it was possible that he might see her. She happened to suggest that she would not be very far from Bergen, as she dared not approach the Elizabeth Town side of the bay.

The demure little maiden wrote just enough in her letter to assure John that he could depend upon her assistance and to make him all the more eager to meet her. An hour before the time John had taken his boat and gone out on the bay, but when he thought how his presence there might be a source of suspicion, he returned and waited as patiently as he could for the appointed time to come.

When at last it came and he had rowed around

the point, he looked eagerly in every direction, and had just said to himself that she had n't yet started, when he saw a little boat approaching. Long before he could see the face of its occupant he recognized the little brown sunbonnet and knew that Hannah was coming. He drew alongside when she approached and for about ten minutes they had a very earnest conversation.

Hannah told him of the troubles on the island, and how that every word which she dared to say in the house of her brother-in-law, in favor of the Colonies, brought down upon her the wrath of the schoolmaster.

"But I don't care," she said, "he always has been of the opinion that if he said anything it was true, and no one had any right to dispute it. I want him to understand that I'm living in his household, not because I'm dependent upon him or because I like him, but just because my sister begs me to stay."

"I wish you were back in Elizabeth Town," said John.

"So do I," replied Hannah, "but I don't see any prospect of my being there very soon, unless the Colonies learn how to whip Great Britain, and that does n't seem very probable."

"I don't know," replied John; "there's no knowing what men will do when they're fighting for their own homes, and England has about all she wants on her hands in her troubles on the Continent. The

fight we've had already at Lexington and Concord, and on Lake Champlain and at Bunker Hill don't look as if our men were going to run right away."

"But you have not yet met all that England can do, the schoolmaster says," replied Hannah; "and he prophesies that when the Colonies go a little further, and get England thoroughly aroused, then this rebellion will be crushed very quickly."

"Time will have to prove that," said John, "but now I want to know whether you have heard anything about this business of which I wrote you. We are suspicious that Schoolmaster Chase is having some business transactions with some of our men over at Elizabeth Town that are not just exactly right. Do you know anything about it?"

"I know that he is getting supplies from over there," said Hannah, "and I know that he has something on hand to-morrow, too, for I heard him say at the table this morning that to-morrow would be a very busy day with him, and that he had to look pretty sharp or some of you people would catch him."

"I'm glad he appreciates our efforts to get closer to him," said John. "You don't know where it is, do you, that he gets his supplies from?"

"Not exactly," replied Hannah, "but I know they've a place where they meet near the shore, though I can't tell you just where it is."

"That's just exactly what I thought," said John.

“There’s a little hut down on the marsh that they use I’m certain, but let me do my best I can’t find out the mystery. I took a party of men down there, thinking I’d made a great discovery not long ago, and when I got there, there was n’t anything to be seen in the house but some old dead fish and some seines. The men threatened to tar and feather me for leading them on what they called a wild-goose chase, and I’ve been trying harder than ever since to solve the mystery, but I have n’t found out anything yet.”

“Well, I wish you success to-morrow,” said Hannah as she took up her oars and prepared to start back toward the island.

“Hold on a minute, Hannah!” called John.

“Can’t you send me a letter if anything comes up that I ought to know?”

“It is n’t proper for young ladies to be writing letters to young gentlemen,” said Hannah with a twinkle in her eyes.

“Oh, but you can do that for me; I know you can,” said John, who in his secret heart was unable to tell which he cared more for, the letter which Hannah might write, or the news which the letter might contain.

“Perhaps I might send you a little note by the way of New York if anything of great importance came up,” said Hannah, “but it will be difficult to send word to you direct. You know the ‘Jews

have no dealings with the Samaritans,' and so I'm going to row back now to the other side;" and this time she did not stop when John called to her, and soon was out of sight.

John slowly rowed homeward, and decided that he and Joseph would start again on their fishing trips on the morrow. Hannah had told him that the schoolmaster was expecting to make some deals on the following day, and John thought that it would be a good time for them to be on the watch. He was very desirous of trapping the schoolmaster, both because his own pride had been touched by the failure of the former expedition to the hut, and also because he knew that the transactions, which were being carried on secretly between some of the weak-kneed Jersey men and the people of Staten Island after the proclamation, were a source of genuine annoyance to his father, and were by him and the leading men of the town regarded as a serious cause for fear.

Accordingly on the following morning the two boys started out once more, ostensibly for a fishing trip. They displayed more openly than they usually did the tackle in their boat, and tried to give the impression to every one they saw that they were simply resuming the fishing which had been interrupted by their trip to Cambridge.

All day long they kept in sight of the Point and carefully watched the shore of Staten Island, to see

if any one started from there towards the Jersey shore.

Late in the afternoon, when they were returning, they did see a boat start forth from Staten Island in which were two men, one of whom they soon recognized as the schoolmaster.

"Now's our time, John," said Joseph excitedly. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to stay here and see what he does," replied John; and they had not long to wait, for the boat with its two occupants soon came back from the inlet and started across the bay.

"The boat is n't loaded, is it?" said Joseph.

"No, I don't think it is," replied John. "That's all the better for what I want to do."

"What are you going to do?" asked Joseph.

"I'm going straight up the inlet to the hut again, and I'm going to see if I can't find something now. These men have just come away from there, and there must be something that made them go over to the hut, though it's the biggest puzzle I've ever had, and I don't like to give up beaten."

Accordingly the boys rowed up the inlet as quietly and as rapidly as they could, and soon came to the place where the hut was. As they leaped ashore, what was their surprise to see Jimmie Todd standing on the bank as if on guard.

He was surprised as the boys approached, and yet his face took on a broad grin as the boys came near.

John's face flushed as he recognized the meaning of Jimmie's expression, and without saying anything to him, he at once approached the hut, and finding the door unlocked, threw it open. There were the same dead fish on the floor, the same old hats on the walls, and the same broken seines hanging from the pegs.

They were more puzzled than ever. What could be the meaning of it all? Could it be that they were mistaken in supposing that that place was the rallying point?

John thought over what he had seen that day, and he knew that this conjecture could not be true. He looked hopelessly around the building, but nothing rewarded his search, and without deigning to notice the derisive laugh of little Jimmie, he went down to the boat, whither Joseph had preceded him, and started for home. The boys did not talk much as they rowed up the creek, but Joseph knew from the determined look on John's face that he had no thought of abandoning the search or giving up the enterprise.

That night John had a long talk with his father. "I never thought," said Mr. Shotwell, "that you boys could have been entirely mistaken about the hut, and yet you are dealing with men who are very shrewd and at times may be desperate."

"I know that," replied John; "but I have n't any thought of giving it up. That's all the more reason why I should keep on and search it out."

"It will be a good thing for the town if you can find out about it," said his father; "for if this goes on much longer, it's going to demoralize everything and everybody."

"I'll do the best I can," said John, "and I'm not going to get beaten if I can help it."

"Well, success go with you," said his father, as he left the room.

The jokes which the men quietly passed upon the boys when they saluted them on the street did not serve to soothe their feelings, and when the small boys would hail them and ask whether they had seen any wild geese passing over Elizabeth Town lately, or not, the boys became more and more angry.

After several days there came a letter from Hannah, in which she told John that on the next day she was sure that business of unusual importance was going to be transacted, and that she suspected that the place on the shore to which she had referred would be the place for the meeting.

"Now's our time, John," said Joseph, "and we'll set a trap that even this reynard can't get out of."

The boys again went down the bay the next morning and resumed their watch. Early in the afternoon they saw the schoolmaster again start forth from Staten Island and make his way up the inlet. He was gone but a few moments and then returned and passed quickly out of sight.

“Does n’t that beat the Dutch?” said Joseph. “I should be inclined to think he was doing it just to bother us, if he knew we were here; but he does n’t know anything about that part of it, and the schoolmaster is n’t one to care very much for the effect of his doings upon others, so there’s business of some kind going on, I know.”

“So do I,” said John, “and I’m going to the hut now and see if I can’t find out something more.”

When the boys approached the hut this time there was no one to be seen. They fastened their boat to the bank and cautiously approached the shanty. No one appeared, and they stopped in front of the door and hailed any one who might be within. No answer was given to their summons, and then they approached the door and knocked. Still no reply was received, and again they knocked, but the silence was unbroken; and after the boys had glanced in every direction, they were startled as they saw some one coming down the path which led to the mainland.

“He’s got something on his back,” said Joseph; “and he’s pretty well loaded, too. Let’s hide here somewhere and see what he’ll do.”

The boys quickly drew out of sight and waited for the man to approach.

When he came to the door he placed his heavy bundle on the ground, and the boys were startled as they saw that it was Jimmie Todd’s father. He

wiped the perspiration from his brow, and then in a minute opened the door and taking his bundle disappeared from sight.

"We've got it now, John; we've got it now," said Joseph; but the boys remained concealed, waiting for further developments. Not many minutes had passed when the door was opened again and Mr. Todd came forth without his bundle, and glancing hurriedly about, started on the run up the path.

As soon as he was out of sight, the boys, highly elated at what they had seen and certain now that the mystery was about to be solved, hurriedly approached the hut and opened the door.

They stopped in surprise. Not a thing had been changed, no evidence of any visitor having been there was to be seen, and the old hats and seines were hanging just as they had been before, and the odor of dead fish was as penetrating as ever.

"What's the meaning of it all?" said Joseph half-afraid. "Here we see this man come with a big bundle and take it inside this shanty, and then step outside without it, and yet when we open the door it is n't here."

John made no reply, although he was as puzzled as his friend. He looked all around the walls, but nothing new rewarded his search. Joseph mechanically pushed the stick which he was carrying through an old hat on the floor and whirling it on the end threw it out the door.

“What’s that strap, Joseph?” said John.

“It’s nothing but an old piece of leather.”

“Well, perhaps it isn’t, but let’s try it and see,” and taking hold of the strap John began to pull.

“It’s fast, anyway,” he said in a moment, “and I believe it’s something like a trap door here. Let’s see.”

“It does look a little as if it was arranged, that’s so,” replied Joseph. “The old hat lying over the spot accidental like, and that dirty-looking piece of leather fast to the floor does look a little suspicious. Well, I’ll take a hold with you;” and together the boys pulled with all their strength.

“It gives a little. It is a trap door, I do believe,” said Joseph excitedly.

“There’s something blocking it, if it is,” said John, and he began to look carefully along the edges of the board. “Aha! I’ve found it,” he said in great excitement as he pulled two or three wooden pins forth which had presented merely the appearance of knots in the boards.

He quickly removed these, and then when the boys pulled together, the trap door, for such it was, gave way at once. The boys were surprised at the sight that met their eyes. There was an apartment filled with supplies such as would be needed by the soldiers and the men on Staten Island.

“What fools we were!” said Joseph at last. “We

might have known this floor was too high, and the beams would n't make up the difference."

"The fact that it was built right on the ground," said John, "made me think that they had made that step so as to keep the floor from being damp. Well, we've got it now, and I won't hear any more of those urchins calling out 'wild geese' to me."

"Not unless you get caught and plucked by the other side," said Joseph, who was somewhat afraid. "It's time for us to be getting out of here."

"That's so," said John, "but I'm going to take something with me;" and reaching down he picked up a letter which he saw lying there, and taking one or two samples of the things they had found they quickly went back to their boat and started for home.

"We did n't get out of here any too soon," said Joseph in a low tone after they had turned out of the inlet and were going up the shore.

"That's true," said John, looking in the direction in which his companion had pointed. "They're bound for the Point, that's sure, and I should n't be surprised if it was the schoolmaster himself, though I can't see very well so far."

"Hannah was right," said Joseph.

"You did n't suppose she'd be anything else, did you?" said John, as he began to row harder, and soon sent the boat into the creek.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ONE MYSTERY SOLVED AND ANOTHER BEGINS.

WHEN the boys, filled with the discovery which they had made, arrived almost breathless at John's house, they were disappointed when they learned that his father was not at home, but had gone to the farm for the day. The impatient boys were unwilling to wait for his return. Taking their horses from the barn, they immediately started forth to meet him.

They had only gone half the distance when they saw Mr. Shotwell riding leisurely homeward on horseback, and when he recognized who it was riding so rapidly toward him, he checked his horse and waited for them to approach.

"What's the matter, John? Has anything gone wrong at home?" he said quickly.

"No, nothing wrong, something good;" and the boys began to tell him of their discovery.

"Not so fast, not so fast," said Mr. Shotwell at last. "You're talking both together, and so rapidly that I can't tell your words apart. Now, John, you tell me just what you've done;" and John proceeded to give his father an account of the discovery which they had made that afternoon.

The letter which John had found and had brought with him, they read and found that it was a notice that on the very next day some more goods would be brought; and it also contained the bill for those which already were there.

As they rode leisurely towards home Mr. Shotwell praised the young enthusiasts for their success, and talked over the plans which they proposed for bringing the goods away.

It was finally decided that, on the morning of the next day, a small party of men upon whom they could rely should be gathered, and that these should go down to the hut in two parties, as they had done on the previous expedition, and thus be ready for any emergency on land or water.

The men to whom the boys spoke that evening were very willing to go, although one or two of them good-humoredly asked the boys whether they were sure there were no wild-geese feathers around the shanty now. Only four besides the boys were invited, and two of them were to go by land and approach by way of the path, and two were to go in the sailboat, while John and Joseph were to approach in their skiff.

The sun had not yet risen when the little party together approached the hut. No one had been seen, and no apparent danger threatened them. The boys, however, were more excited now than they had been on the previous day.

Suppose the men had been there during their absence and removed all that they had discovered? How angry their companions would be at having been brought there a second time on what they might now term with good grace, in the event of failure, a "wild goose chase"; but John thought of the samples which they had taken, and he knew that they were enough to show that they had not been entirely mistaken; besides, there was the trap-door which he felt sure they could open, and which, if it did not reveal to them anything hidden beneath it, would at least show clearly the hiding-place which had been used. They stood a moment about the building and were startled as they heard the sound of oars behind them.

"There's some one coming up the inlet," said Joseph, and they all waited to see who the newcomer was. The man, whoever he was, was evidently surprised at finding boats in the inlet, and it was some moments before he approached the hut, and then in a very guarded and suspicious way.

"It's Jimmie Todd's dad," said Joseph, as he came in sight, and they all stepped forth from behind the hut to greet him. He was somewhat confused as he recognized the party, and stammered forth something about its being a good morning for fishing.

"Yes, that's just what we came down here for," said Joseph; "we thought of going fishing and

did n't know but under the shanty we'd find some good bait."

Mr. Todd glanced quickly at him, and then resumed the quiet indifference which he had manifested from the beginning.

"We might as well go in and see what we can find," said the boys as they threw open the door, and approaching the part of the floor where the strap was, they pushed aside the old hat which covered it, and pulling out the pegs lifted the door.

It was a sight indeed to startle them which was disclosed to their view. The supplies which the boys had found there on the preceding day had been largely increased, and the entire apartment was now filled.

A great shout went up from the boys, and cheer after cheer was given. One of the men who had come with them in accordance with Mr. Shotwell's suggestion, and of whom they had all been somewhat suspicious, was the loudest in his shouts of approval.

"Watch that fellow, Joe," said John; "he's yelling to keep up his courage. I tell you he knew something about this before, in my opinion."

But the watch they had stationed here came hurriedly towards them and reported that a boat with two men in it was coming up the inlet. Their own boats meanwhile had been carried farther up the little stream and hidden among the rushes, so that

the approaching party came on without any suspicion, and when they had made fast their boat they boldly approached the hut.

It would have been difficult to tell which party was the more surprised when they met, the schoolmaster and his companion or the men who were with the boys. Over the face of Schoolmaster Chase the look of dismay which came when he first saw that the hiding-place had been found, turned to one of hatred when he saw John and Joseph standing in the midst of the company; but he waited for no conversation and quickly started back for his boat.

Joseph could not resist the temptation to call after him as he left and invite him to come again.

“Mark me, sir! Mark me,” shouted Joseph, “you’ll find everything you want here from darn-
ing-needles to traitors and Tories;” but the schoolmaster never glanced behind him and soon was out of sight.

The party at once began to carry the things which they had found to the boat which they had brought for the purpose of receiving them, and a number of trips had to be made before everything had been taken. Mr. Todd had looked on with a sorrowful face while this was being done, but he uttered no word of protest, only declaring that he happened to be there, and had been preparing to go on a fishing

trip, and that was the only reason for his being near the old fish house ; but as no one paid any attention to him, they soon saw him returning to the town.

At last everything had been carried on board the boat and all were ready to go. The boys were the last to leave the hut. As they rowed down the inlet their faces beamed ; they looked at each other and frequently burst into a laugh, so glad were they that the time had come when they could be vindicated, and the evil practice which their fathers were so much opposed to, had been discovered. As they came out into the bay and rowed up towards the creek, the party on board the big boat, which was ahead of them, became more and more noisy.

“ No more goose feathers for you,” called out one of them to the boys ; “ pin feathers are enough.” But the boys only shouted by way of reply, and the conversation was not continued. Goose feathers and pin feathers both were subjects about which the boys did not care to talk.

“ Well, they can say all they want to about pin feathers,” said Joseph as he turned to John ; “ we are n’t very old, it’s true, and the war is n’t very old either, and yet we’ve seen more of it than any of those fellows who are so free to talk about ‘ wild-goose chases ’ and ‘ pin feathers. ’ ”

“ We shall have to do a little as General Washington did,” said John. “ Don’t you know when he went to Cambridge what fun the Tory papers made

of him on his arrival? Don't you remember that song they printed that begins:—

“When Congress sent great Washington,
All clothed in power and breeches,
To meet old Britain's warlike sons
And make some rebel speeches;

and ends with the verse:—

The patriot brave, the patriot fair,
From fervor had grown thinner;
So off they march'd with patriot zeal,
And took a patriot dinner”?

“What do they call a patriot dinner?” said Joseph to John when he had finished.

“Corn pudding and Yankee rum,” replied John.

“There goes the ferry, but there's only one on board,” said Joseph, pointing to the boat in the distance, and they both became quiet. A little later Joseph said: “That one passenger they've got on the ferry acts as if he knows us. See him wave his hand. He acts as if he was waving it at us.”

“I can't tell who it is, but let's give him a cheer anyway,” said John; and the boys shouted together.

Again the stranger waved his hands more violently than before, and the boys shouted in reply; but when the last shout from the stranger had been heard, Joseph looked at John with a startled expression upon his face and said: “I know that voice; at least I thought I did.”

"Who do you think it is?" said John in a low tone.

"It sounded like Evart," replied Joseph, "but of course it is n't possible."

"I don't know," replied John, "I only wish it were. I wish it were," he repeated slowly to himself.

Both the boys, however, were strangely agitated and but little inclined to talk. The ferryboat meanwhile had reached its dock, and whoever the stranger was, he had immediately disappeared.

The boys were somewhat excited as they rowed up the creek. They did not have much to say to each other, but the stranger's voice, which had reminded them so much of their lost companion, had made each of them thoughtful, and they were silent, though the heart of each was full.

Could it be possible that Evart had returned? Nearly a half-year had passed since he had disappeared in the fog off the island, and the faint hopes which they had had at the beginning, that some day, or somehow, he would come back to them, had long since become dead.

Each of the boys was asking himself this question many times, "Could it by any possibility be their lost friend?" But at last their boat was made fast to the dock, and in a strange excitement, though unusually quiet, they left the bank and climbed upon the bridge.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE boys found John's father waiting for them on the old stone bridge. Reports had already come of the success of the expedition to the hut on the marsh, and his heart was glad, and he was unusually warm in his praise of the boys. Like the other men of those times, he was not given largely to praising his own children, and many a time the boys of those days grew up to manhood without realizing the tender affection in which their fathers held them.

But for some strange reason the boys had not much to say to him, and after he had spoken a few sentences he quietly said: "I saw some one a few minutes ago whom I think you know."

The boys looked at him with eager and white faces, and John in a low voice said: "It was n't Evart, was it?"

"Why, what made you think of him?" said his father, surprised. "I thought you'd given him up for lost months ago."

"Oh! but was it Evart? Tell me, tell me quick," said John.

"Why, yes, I did see him, and I was glad to see

him too ;” and his father told them how he had met him coming up the old street that led down to the bay. “He must have come over on the ferry; indeed he told me that he did. He only stopped long enough to answer my questions and then started for home on a run. He seemed to be in a strange hurry for some reason, to get there,” said Mr. Shotwell with a smile. “I told him they were all well there, but it did n’t seem to make any difference with him, he would n’t stop for anything.”

“We thought we saw him down on the bay,” said Joseph, “and now we know we did. He was on the ferryboat, and he stood up and waved his hands and shouted at us, but we could hardly believe our own senses, and neither one of us dared to say what we thought all the way up the creek.”

“I knew it,” said John; “but there are times when you don’t want to talk much, — you don’t feel like it, — and I was thinking of Evart, and how he must have been drowned out at sea somewhere, and how we’d got back home safely, and how glad our folks were, and somehow, in spite of the good luck we’d had down there in the hut on the marsh, I did n’t feel like saying very much. I wonder if it would do,” he continued, turning to his father, “for us to go up to his house now?”

“Why, yes,” said his father, “I rather think he’d be glad to see you; I understand his mother is still there at his aunt’s, and I don’t suppose that she’ll

think any the less of her own boy when she sees him with his two friends again ;” and John was surprised as he saw that his father’s eyes were full of tears as he spoke.

The boys started on a run, leaving Mr. Shotwell on the bridge, and went at once to the home of Evart’s aunt, with whom he had lived during his stay in Elizabeth Town. When they came to the gate and opened it and started to run up the walk, they stopped as they heard the sound of crying in the house.

“ I guess the folks are so glad to see him in there that we’d better not go in,” said Joseph. The sight of sorrow always touched the heart of the impulsive boy, and he was not one who would enter its presence unless he could be of some assistance.

John nodded his head and they were about to turn around and go down the long walk, when they heard some one in the house shout to them, “ Where are you going, boys? Why don’t you come in here?” and looking up they saw Evart standing on the porch, his mother holding one arm and his aunt the other.

“ Come in here and help me!” Evart called. “ I don’t think I’ll ever get away from these two women.”

The boys gladly responded and ran up the steps to welcome the friend who had been to each of them like a brother. They had never expected to see him again, and now when they saw him standing before

them the same as of old, only a little browner and somewhat sturdier, they could hardly believe their eyes.

It was a glad time in which they shared, and the long story which Evart had to tell kept them till late in the day, but with glad hearts at last they started for their homes, rejoicing that the end had come to the long uncertainty, and that the hopes which they at times almost had lost had indeed been fulfilled.

It was not long, however, before Evart came to John's house, and again he had to go over the story of his wanderings before his father and mother. When he told of Ethan Cobb and his strange sayings and doings, Mr. Shotwell said: "Why, I think I must know him. At any rate, I knew people by that name in Connecticut, and the description which you have given of this man is almost an exact one of the man who I think was his father, and whom I knew in his younger days."

There were great rejoicings in Elizabeth Town, especially among the younger people, at the return of Evart Van Slyke, and many an evening was spent in celebrating the event.

The days passed on and the strife of the Colonies became more and more marked. John's father was often away from home, for he was an ardent Whig, and his zealous patriotism made him in demand in many places. A feeling of uncertainty was manifest on every side. In New York, in New England, in

the South as well as in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the people were becoming thoroughly aroused. Many of those who were in favor of the war which was being waged were not in favor, however, of an independent form of government. Still, some of the men were wise enough to see that this was the only solution of the problem, and they also knew that a declaration of independence would much more sharply define the line between those who were friends of the Colonies and of Great Britain. The reports came from the headquarters of the army of the stirring work which Benedict Arnold had done, and of the proposed expedition which he was to lead through the wilderness of Maine against Canada.

The relations between the people of Staten Island and those on the Jersey shore became more and more strained. Secret dealings were still kept up, such as John and Joseph had discovered; but they were done in such a way that the most of those engaged in them were not found out, although it was more than suspected that many of them were from among the professed friends of the Colonies. As in other trying times, some of the people were neither hot nor cold in their attitude toward the cause, and tried not to commit themselves to either side; but the time soon came when this negative position could no longer be maintained and every man had to declare himself, though this was done often in a way that surprised his friends and his neighbors.

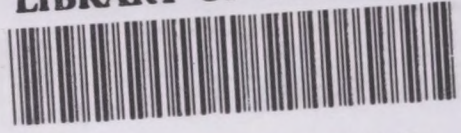
The letters which Hannah had sent to John became somewhat frequent; either the matters of importance or business multiplied, or else there was some question perpetually left unanswered which called for a reply from her. John did not stop to think long over the cause of this, but was well satisfied if only he could receive the letters of the demure little maiden.

The determined stand which had been made at Lexington and Concord, the brave fight on Breed's Hill, the bold work on Lake Champlain, the condition of Boston, and the general stirring of patriotic sentiment throughout the country were beginning to have their effect. The winter was fast coming on, and all parties were looking forward to it with dread. The exciting events of the spring of 1775 were as nothing compared with those which were to follow. No one knew what the end was to be, but that the struggling cause of American liberty was just on the eve of great events every one felt certain. It was the one great topic of conversation on every street and in every home, and these boys whose fortunes we have followed through these chapters were soon called upon to enter into many of the exciting events of the times. What they did, where they went, the experiences which they had, we shall have to reserve for another book which we shall call *THREE YOUNG CONTINENTALS*.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00025671247